CONQUERING ADVENTURE GAMES

Includes: ADVENTURE 350/550, WITNESS, DEADLINE, SUSPENDED, ENCHANTER, ZORK I, II & III, and more!

CARL TOWNSEND

dilithium Press

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Carl Townsend

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Beaverton, Oregon

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Preface

This book is intended as a guide for avid explorers who like to venture into the fascinating world of adventure games. The book is intended not only as a review of the current adventure games for CP/M and MS-DOS operating systems. It also has a guide for hints and tips in exploring many of these games. You will not find all of the current adventure games here, but you will find the favorites. You will also gain a sense of history in the development of these games and meet some of the people who created them. Some of the hints and tips will be hidden in puzzles and games. Finally, we will give you some help in beginning to design your own adventure games.

The hints and clues are coded in the chapters where they are used. The code is changed with each chapter. To use the hints, you will need to find the coding used for each chapter. In chapters that describe more than one game, you may find the code is changed for each game.

Many of these games are available for various computer systems. The comments in this book are based specifically on those versions that run on the IBM PC under the PC-DOS version of the MS-DOS operating system.

Introduction

he first computerized adventure game emerged in the seventies. A new Univac mainframe computer had just been installed where I worked, and the Univac people were happy to give us a copy of the new game to show the programmers what the Univac could do. My wife hardly saw me for a month. Each evening I would come home from work for a quick dinner, then drive back to work and play Adventure until eleven or later. Wandering through the twisty mazes and fighting dwarves, pirates, and the troll, I had entered a fantasy land I had never experienced before.

At that time, the game took two million bytes of computer memory, and whenever it was loaded to the giant Univac the system would appear to slow down for any other users. We were forbidden to play Adventure during the day, as it dramatically slowed down production work. The system operators learned to detect when Adventure was executing and could shut a user down, so we renamed the program to look like a production program and kept playing. The managers then tried to erase the Adventure programs (each user had his or her own copy now), but the programmers backed up the game carefully to tapes and were able to reload the game whenever necessary.

Finally, the managers gave up and put a time lock on the game. After fifteen minutes, a gray wizard would appear in a mist and request the magic word if we wished to continue. Since no one knew the magic word, the game could only be played after hours when the time lock was off. The fifteen minute lock during the day still permitted us to show the game to visitors (the game was particularly intriguing to visiting managers).

I remember late one night when there were two of us in the lab playing Adventure at the same time on two separate terminals. Both of us were so tired we were leaning on the terminals and trying to map mazes as we ventured further into the cave. I groggily told my fellow explorer that one day I would be able to play this game on my personal computer at home. We both chuckled. Scarcely a year later my prediction came true as a complete, true copy was running on my Altair computer at home. What was even more strange was that on a single floppy disk with only a quarter of a million bytes of storage I could keep both a French and an English version of the game.

1

Welcome to the Adventure

h! It is snowing outside and there is a fire crackling in the fireplace. The family is looking for something different to do to escape the television and housework. A small disk is slipped into the home computer and suddenly everyone is transported to a narrow road by a stream and a wellhouse. You enter the wellhouse and find a lamp, a bottle, a key and some food. There must be a cave somewhere, but where? You take the lamp, the bottle, the food, and the key and try to follow the stream. Soon you discover a locked grate and, miraculously, the key fits! The grate leads down to a small crawlway going west. The adventure has begun and, before long, everyone is involved.

If you are looking for your first adventure game, you might wish to study the available games carefully. There are many *adventure* games on the market, but there are basically only three types of adventure games: the graphic adventure; the prose adventure; and the role-playing adventure. Many companies specify on the label which category their adventure games belong in. You will find, however, that products vary widely in their intended audience, their creative challenge, how well they hold your interest, and their cost.

The Graphic Adventure

The graphic adventure is an exploration game in which the player gains points by fighting adversaries, accumulating treasures, and dealing with obstacles. These games are generally a test of coordination and (in some cases) memory skills. Many are home computer versions of arcade games, which are primarily designed to gobble quarters as fast as possible without testing creative or mental ability. The graphics challenge and appeal to younger children much more than the prose and role-playing adventures do.

The recent emergence of laser technology in arcade games has added a new dimension to this type of adventure game. Dungeon's Lair, the pioneer of the laser technology adventure games, uses animation and a laser disk to give the player a wide variety of options in exploring a dungeon with lifelike graphics. It is only a matter of time until these same games are available to the home market.

Most graphic adventure games use extensive computer memory and disk storage for the video images and most of the computer processing time is needed to process and control the video images. This leaves very little processing time and storage left for the more intelligent and creative aspects of gaming. This will change as faster processors, video disks and cheaper memory become available. Until then, you will probably find that a game of this type will interest you for a few months and then begin collecting dust on your shelf.

Only a few graphic adventure games are discussed in this book. Chapter 15 deals with some of the more popular ones. The role-playing games, which are described next, are often enhanced with some level of graphics.

Role-Playing Games

The role-playing games are modeled after the Dungeons and Dragons board game that was developed in the late sixties by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson for TSR Hobbies. In this game one person, called the Dungeon Master (or DM), creates a fantasy setting for the game. Although this is sometimes called the dungeon, it may be a cave, a spaceship, a ghost town, a haunted house, or a world somewhere in the future. This fantasy world is normally created in levels, with the deeper levels involving more dangers and treasures. Each level is further divided into rooms. The DM then writes

a complete description of each room and adds monsters (or opponents), traps, treasures, secret doors, and other features to challenge the adventurer. It is not unusual for a DM to spend years creating an elaborate fantasy world modeled on a famous story or novel, such as Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*.

After the fantasy world is created, players create one or more fantasy explorers who take on unique personalities. Dice or some random number generators are used to determine each character's strength, intelligence, wisdom, dexterity, constitution, charisma, initial wealth, and health. An occupation is then selected for each character, based on his or her talents. Typical occupations include fighters, magic users, clerics, or thieves. Of course, the fantasy character will also need a name. The player need not be human. Other character possibilities include hobbits, dwarves, and elves. The fantasy player then purchases equipment for the journey with some of his or her personal wealth and begins exploring the dungeon. In the board game, this exploration involves a lifelike dialogue, such as:

DM:	*You are at a fork in the corridor. One corridor veers northwest, the other northeast.*
Player:	*We start northwest.*
DM:	*You hear a low rumble in the distance.*
Player:	*We change our mind and move northeast.*
DM:	*The rumble continues at a lower level. You see a door ahead about twenty feet on the right.*
Player:	*We approach the door quietly and our thief listens at it.*
DM:	*The rumble has stopped. There is a quiet ticking sound behind the door. The door is solid oak with only a small keyhole.*
Player:	*The thief picks the lock.*
DM:	*The key turns and the door can be opened.*
Player:	*We open the door slowly and wait before entering, using our light to scan the room.*
DM:	*The room is apparently empty except for some water dripping in the corner — which makes the ticking sound.*

The game involves active role-playing and requires considerable creativity and participation. With some players, the involvement can become so intense that the fantasy world becomes real and the real world becomes fantasy. The direction of the game is not predetermined and every adventure is different. There is no *right* decision. The outcome of any specific encounter depends upon the tactics of both the players and the DM, the character traits of the fantasy players and monsters, and random number generators (special dice) that are used continuously in the game.

Dungeons and Dragons can be computerized and in Chapters 12 to 14 you will look at computerized versions of this type of adventure game. Computerized versions still lack much of the excitement and involvement of a real Dungeons and Dragons game (or D&D, as the explorers say). The creativity demanded is of too high a level for today's home computer. The computer is helpful, however, for creating the fantasy world and characters. It can also be useful for setting up probability statistics for the various encounters. Manuals and board games are available from TSR Games, Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. D&D games are governed by specific rules developed, copyrighted, and marketed in manuals by TSR Games. You will also see how electronic mail can be used to play versions of this game in Chapter 16.

The Prose Adventure

The prose adventure game is generally regarded as the most challenging type of adventure game for today's microcomputers and is the primary subject of this book. As with D&D, this type of game involves an elaborate fantasy world, complete with dangers, treasures, and adversaries. Unlike D&D, however, the game is merely *perceived* as open-ended and the explorer is only a puppet or an extension of the player in the fantasy world. The fantasy explorer has no specific personality or uniqueness and is exposed to all of the risks and dangers of the journey.

The fantasy player may be killed in the exploration, but is often given a chance at a few reincarnations to prevent the necessity of restarting the entire game after each death. If you prefer, you can skip the reincarnations and start the game over each time your explorer dies. There is no real role-playing in this type of game. The game is more like a puzzle or multiple puzzles that the player must solve. It may take many months to solve the adventure and there may be hundreds of rooms. During this time the game

will be extremely challenging and exciting. Once completed, however, the game will be of little interest because the output of the adventure is fairly predetermined.

Part of the challenge of a prose adventure is to discover the object of the game and the rules. Commands are usually entered as verb/noun combinations (such as GO WEST). Some games permit the additional use of adjectives and prepositions (such as PUT THE SINGING SWORD IN THE TROPHY CASE). The vocabulary in some games is extensive, including 1000 or more words in some cases. The room descriptions are vivid and can be lengthy, giving a sense of actually participating in the adventure. The descriptions are often done so well that the exploration may be more graphic than a graphic adventure.

Most of the prose adventures require creative strategies for solutions. Treasures are abundant, and the explorer gets points for recovering each treasure, overcoming dangers, and discovering hidden areas of the fantasy world. Points may or may not be part of the object of the game and the object and rules are seldom defined. This, of course, is part of the puzzle.

The prose adventure differs from the role-playing games in several ways. First, the fantasy player is more like a puppet and has little personality. The prose game is generally not open-ended, and the end of the game is predetermined. The game will always play the same way if you make the same choices. The advantage of the prose game, however, is that the fantasy world can be very complex, with descriptions that are more graphic than the displayed graphics of a role-playing adventure. Various puzzles await the player, including perhaps the very object of the game. Whereas a computerized role-playing game has very dull graphics and the actions are limited (move, take, and fight), the prose adventure often permits the user to enter complete sentences in exploring. In both types of games the person who creates the game determines the world of the game and the rules by which that world will operate.

The Future

As personal computers acquire greater processing speed and memory, the distinction between the various types of adventure games will decrease and the games will gain new features. Laser disks will permit extensive graphics on home systems to further enhance the puzzles of the prose adventures and the personalized characters of the role-playing games. Most of the

future games will be open-ended, with a randomness that will make each game unique. Each time you play the game, the ending could be different.

At several world's fairs I have visited an exhibit from Czechoslovakia in which a movie was shown to the audience. At each decision point for the main actor in the movie, the movie was stopped and the audience made the decision for the actor by voting. After each vote, the movie continued in the direction of the majority vote. At the same time, live actors narrated the movie, attempting to use psychology to influence the voting. After a while, a murder was committed in the movie and I, as a participant, actually felt and experienced guilt because I had been making the decisions for the actor. It is almost certain that future versions of adventure games will approach and even surpass this level of participation. There is one difference, however. In the world's fair exhibit, the game moved forward on the consensual decision of a group. In future adventure games, you, as an individual participant, will determine the direction of the game and the play will reflect your own personal decisions.

2

Introduction to Adventure Games

Before purchasing your first adventure game, shop carefully. Decide on the type of adventure game you want and then choose the game. Each game has a certain world view, or perception of reality, even though it is a fantasy game. Be sure that the game you purchase coincides with your perception of the world. This may mean writing your own game. Remember that children will absorb certain values from an adventure game as they play it. Many of the adventure games reflect violence or contain strange characters. Some games contain fantasy worlds with values or other features that may clash with your personal convictions.

The Game Vocabulary

If you purchase a prose or graphic adventure, the fantasy world will already have been created. The fantasy world may be a cave, a haunted house, or a ghost town. The person who created the setting defined the rules by which this fantasy world will operate. For you, the explorer, the objective, rules, and vocabulary are unknown. As you play the game, you should draw a map carefully showing pathways, treasures, and tools. We will show you later how this is done. The fantasy world will consist of many rooms, which are often called nodes in the game. Corridors and passages connect the nodes.

You will discover many objects as you explore. Some are treasures and others are tools. You will have to figure out which objects are treasures and which are tools. Some objects may be neither treasures nor tools and exist only to throw you off the track. Tools are used to discover treasures and gain access to hidden areas. They have no value beyond this and they can be discarded when they are no longer needed. Part of the object of the game is to figure out what to do with the treasures.

When you have discovered all the treasures in a prose adventure, you often are switched to a different level or you suddenly gain access to a new area. This is the beginning of the endgame, or final puzzle.

One or more mazes may exist in the game to trap the unwary. During early explorations you should try to avoid these. As you gain experience, you will probably discover you will need to map the mazes to complete the adventure.

Getting Started

Before beginning, study the material that successful Dungeon Masters use to build their dungeons. Some inspiring authors include J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Ann McCaffrey, and George MacDonald. If you like detective prose adventure games, read detective stories and study the strategies of master detectives. This will give you some clues about the basic rules of fantasy worlds. Also study your mythology and the D&D books from TSR Games. Read carefully any material that comes with your game, paying particular attention to instructions for saving the game and information on the vocabulary.

When beginning most adventures, avoid concentrating on the details the first few times you play the game. Spend your time learning the vocabulary and how to move about in the fantasy world. Consider your early objective as pure entertainment.

After you have gained some level of confidence with the game vocabulary, begin your exploration again, paying close attention to details. Draw a map as you proceed, indicating where objects are discovered and the apparent exits from each room. Map each maze separately. Save the game frequently in case an untimely decision leads to your demise.

General Strategies

Try to think like the game designer. For example, in Adventure 350 (see Chapter 3) after all treasures have been found, you will hear a soft voice reverberating through the cave with a special message. The entire strategy of the game's creator at this point was built on the player panicking and racing for an exit. If you put yourself in the position of the designer, you can stand a much better chance of survival.

Nearly everything has a use. It is either a tool or a treasure. Occasionally you will find objects that are put there only to throw you off the track. These are called red herrings. The person who created the game generally tries to tie everything together. In some games you will find that a treasure may also be a tool. This can be a problem, as a thief or pirate may also be after the treasure. If you lose it, you may find yourself without the tool to get another treasure unless you can recover the tool (which is also a treasure) from the thief or pirate. Sometimes you can determine if an object is only a tool by using the SCORE command before and after you discover or pick up the object. If your score changes, the object has a treasure value. In some games you must get the treasure to a particular place before you can get the full score for the treasure.

Mapping your explorations is very important. Mapping strategies will be discussed in the next section. Map carefully, redrawing maps as necessary to improve their readability. Do not get lost.

Save the game periodically. Many adventure games give the player a chance at reincarnation after accidental death. Several chances may be given, but you will always lose points and have to find your lantern and whatever treasures you were carrying at the time. I personally avoid this, and instead save the game often and, when killed, restart from the last game I saved. In some detective games the game is all over if you get killed.

Read descriptions carefully. Hints are often hidden in descriptions. Pay attention to detail and clues about magic words. Save games before you use magic words, however, because they sometimes give unpredictable results. Be wary of red herrings (false clues). For example, the magazine in Adventure 350 and the observation platform in Adventure 550 have no useful purpose and are put in the games as red herrings. In some games, the author will give a clue to a red herring, as George's breakfast in Infocom's Deadline.

Certain events may be time dependent. Avalanches, for example, may be timed to occur after a certain number of moves. In Deadline a real clock is running and events occur at certain times. For example, in one game the telephone always rings at 9:06 in the morning. If you get a message such as "YOU CAN'T DO THAT YET," this is a clue that what you are doing may work, but the timing is not right. Secret passages may exist, but their discovery may depend upon some event yet to occur (as in Zork III) or the use of an object (such as the wand in Zork II).

Know the language and syntax of the game. Some games permit only verbs and nouns, others permit adjectives and prepositions as well. Try unusual things at times just to see what happens (save the game first). In some games abbreviations may exist. S may be used as the command for GO SOUTH. This saves typing. Learn how, if possible, to switch to short descriptions to save time. You should also learn how to direct the output to a printer. This is useful in mapping mazes and finding where you are if you get lost.

Play the game with a few friends. With everyone helping with the puzzles, there is more creative input and imagination and the game will move faster. You will also discover that when you get frustrated and are unable to solve a particular part of the game, if you leave the game or work on another problem, your subconscious mind will continue to work on the mystery and when you renew your pursuit you will have a multitude of ideas to try.

As you get further into a game, you will discover that there is a linear flow to the game solution. Certain tools are needed or problems must be solved before you can attempt to explore other areas. Certain events may seem time dependent. As for example, a candle will only burn for a short while. If it is a tool and you do not use it fairly early in the game, you may not be able to use it at all. On the other hand, carrying a lighted candle into a room filled with gas will be hazardous to your health. Part of the problem of the game is to discover the linear flow necessary for a solution. Often there is more than one possibility, but some will be more efficient that others. For example, if your lamp is only good for a given amount of time, you will need to solve all the problems in that amount of time unless you can figure out a way to relight the lamp. Develop a good linear strategy, seeing each exploration as a single phase. Return with your treasures, save the game, and move to the next phase. Sometimes you will need to save the game temporarily during a phase as you explore a particular danger.

Mapping Strategies

Developing good mapping strategies is one of the basic secrets of successful adventure gaming. Use pencils and large paper, redrawing as necessary when the map gets unreadable. There are twelve basic directions in every room: NORTH, SOUTH, EAST, WEST, SOUTHEAST, SOUTHWEST, NORTHEAST, NORTHWEST, UP, DOWN, IN, and OUT. The description of a room may tell you which directions will work, but hidden exits may exist as well.

Remember that leaving a room in one direction does not necessarily mean you can get back using the reverse direction. For example, in Figure 2.1, leaving room A going west will get you to room B. To get back, you must leave room B from the north. Leaving room B going east will take you to room C. Certain passages may only exist after a time dependent event has occurred or a magic word has been used.

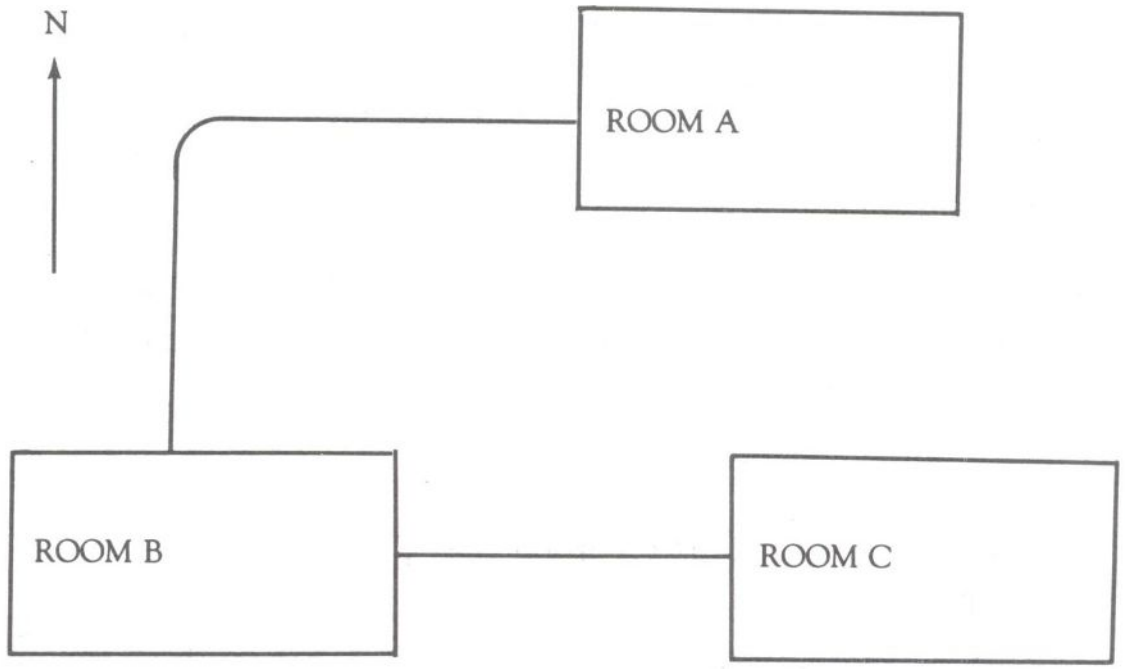

Figure 2.1 The mapping problem

Mazes require additional skill. You know you are in a maze when you get the message: "YOU ARE IN A TWISTY MAZE. ALL PASSAGES ARE THE SAME." No matter which way you go, you get almost the identical message. You will not be able to get out by backtracking for the reason we have seen in Figure 2.1. The best solution is normally to find as

many tools as you can carry and then enter the maze, dropping one tool in the first room. This will make the room unique if you can get back to it. Label your map with this object. Now move in one direction, drop a second tool, mark it on your map, and then try to get back to the first room. If you are successful, you will see the first tool. If not, drop another tool and mark this on your map. Continue until you run out of tools. Map every exit from every room, using colored pencils if necessary. After a part of a maze area is mapped, pick up a few tools in that area and move to another. Check all twelve directions (N, S, E, W, NW, SW, SE, SW, UP, DOWN, I, O) in each room of the maze. This will work in most mazes, but in Zork I there is a thief that will follow you and pick up the objects. In the vending machine maze of Adventure 350 or 550, the maze is so convoluted you will need to keep objects in every room and make many trips to the maze to properly "tag" every room.

Mythology, Theology and Adventure Games

A myth is a story or collection of stories built around a set of symbols. The story may be historically true or a fantasy, since the historical truth of a story does not determine whether or not it is a myth. Myths are important in any culture for building a sense of community and for giving a set of values that can bind the culture together, giving it purpose and direction.

Joseph Campbell, with almost two dozen books on mythology, believes there is no general mythology today, nor can there ever be again. Our culture has become too diverse, our goals too specialized, and change occurs too rapidly for any common set of symbols to communicate effectively. Much of our present mythology is built on an outdated Industrial Age standard.

Futurists and others who are shaping the future struggle to find some way of communicating the visions they see of the new age to others who are trying to survive with outdated world views. Often their vocabulary seems strange and their ideas untried. Somehow these leaders need to help others share their vision. Christ talked in parables. Tolkien wrote fantasies involving hobbits and other strange creatures. Gene Roddenbery brought us a spaceship called Enterprise, with a committed community willing to take unusual risks. Another example is *Alice in Wonderland*, which was originally intended as a political statement.

The adventure game is an emerging new form of parable or myth. The setting and story is shaped by the game designer, who creates a fantasy world using the personal computer, the appropriate software tools, and anywhere from a few hours to a few years of time. The fantasy world can then be tried by explorers, who put themselves at risk with their own personal world view.

The important issue of the adventure game is that the basic generic concept is amoral. Adventure games, in themselves, are neither good nor bad. Poor fantasy worlds can be constructed and used in games, but it is also possible to create strong, healthy and good world models. The choice is left to the designer. A particular game takes on a morality or set of values projected by its creator. This means you will find some products on the market with demons, wizards and a theology that may not agree with yours. The problem is not the adventure game concept, per se, but the world view used to construct the fantasy setting.

If you find yourself frustrated by adventure games that fail to support your own world view or personal moral values, create your own adventure game. Whereas art, music, and literature shaped history in the past, we may well discover the adventure game as a new art form of the future. The creators of these games may be shaping history just as much as did writers and authors of the past.

As we examine various games in this book, the author will mention adversaries you will find in the games and some value concepts that are projected. This does not mean, however, that the author or publisher endorses a particular game or value concept. We are simply trying to give you enough information to make a decision based on your personal world vision.

Educational Opportunities for Adventure Games

Adventure games have almost unlimited educational applications. All forms of the games can be used by psychologists to study behavior patterns to see how a client deals with conflict and stress. A patient could be asked to design a simple adventure game (or just the myth for a game the patient would like to play). In doing this, the psychologist can gain a deeper understanding of how the patient perceives the world.

Graphic adventures teach co-ordination and memory skills. A teacher working with handicapped students would find these games invaluable in teaching co-ordination, as the computer is very patient. In addition, the game will hold the student's attention for long periods of time with little involvement on the part of the teacher.

The prose and role-playing forms of adventure games teach creativity, imagination, and innovation. Many involve multiple puzzles that can take months to solve. The games are also occasionally sold as bilingual, and can be excellent tools in learning foreign languages.

All forms of the games are important as myths or parables in helping us to understand and create the future. Although today's personal computers are somewhat small and have limited memory for this type of application, the emergence of computers with greater memory capacity is already challenging the game designers.

The design of adventure games is an experiment in artificial intelligence. The science of artificial intelligence is the study of machines that perform functions that are normally associated with human intelligence, such as learning, adapting, reasoning, and intuition. Indeed, the Original Adventure began as an experiment in artificial intelligence. For the student, the games serve as an introduction to the study of artificial intelligence and are useful as a beginning point in the study of certain disciplines of this science, such as expert systems and robotics.

3

Adventure 350/550

The first major prose adventure game, now called Original Adventure or Adventure 350, was developed in the mid-seventies by Willie Crowther and Don Woods on the mainframe computers of Stanford and MIT. The same game, expanded to a 550-point version, is now available for most microcomputers.

When Original Adventure was initially developed, it immediately attracted a cult following. The first version of the game was written in Fortran and designed to run on a PDP-10. It was soon compiled for almost all of the existing minicomputers and mainframe computers. Using verb/noun combinations (such as GO WEST) and an extensive vocabulary, a puppet was guided through a colossal cave to gain treasures. To win the game (350 points), all treasures had to be brought to the wellhouse unbroken and the entire cave had to be explored.

The game became available for microcomputers in the late seventies. Of particular interest among the early versions was the SAM76 version that was sold by *Creative Computing*. It attracted me because it resembled the two million byte version (at 32 bits a word) I had previously used on a Univac computer. Now it was sold for microcomputers in a bilingual version on one single-density disk and ran fast enough to be interesting. The SAM76 language impressed me for this reason alone.

The SAM76 version was very close to the original in the number of rooms, objects, treasures and even the endgame. It was developed by Jim Manning, with help from Ancelme Roichel and others. SAM76, as a list processing interpretive language, enabled the game to be highly compressed

and efficiently run on a microcomputer. The SAM76 language interpreter (*not* the SAM76 Adventure) is available from the CP/M user groups as Disk #34 (see Appendix B).

Adventure 350, as a compiled Fortran program, is now available as the Original Adventure through CP/M user groups as Disk #65. Another major contributor to this current version of Adventure is Dave Platt of the Honeywell Los Angeles Development Center. The Fortran source code is available as Disk #56 (if you want to cheat). Since the game is not copyrighted and is distributed free of charge, if you look hard enough you should be able to find it on some of the remote bulletin board systems for MS-DOS. It is also sold by Microsoft and others in versions for almost any microcomputer. In Chapter 18 we discuss another version of Original Adventure that can be altered by the user to create new games.

For those who have successfully completed the Original Adventure, an even more challenging 550-point version is available that was developed by Mike Goetz. All of the original treasures and rooms are there, but the cave has been expanded to twice its original size with many more mazes, treasures, dangers, and challenges. This new version is excellent, but beginning explorers should start with the 350-point Original Adventure. The 550-point version is available through CP/M user groups as Disk #57.

The object of Adventure is to find all of the treasures, carry them back to the wellhouse unbroken, and completely explore the cave.

Overview

The game begins with a short introduction:

> *Somewhere nearby is a Colossal Cave, where others have found fortunes in treasure and gold, though it is rumored that some who enter are never seen again. Magic is said to work in the cave. I will be your hands and eyes. Direct me with commands of 1 or 2 words.*
>
> *You are standing at the end of a road before a small brick building. Around you is a forest. A small stream flows out of the building and down a gully.*

In the 350-point version, you will be exploring a large cave for 15 treasures. The endgame is tripped if all of the treasures are found, regardless of

how much of the cave you have explored or whether the treasures were carried to the wellhouse. To get the maximum score, all treasures must be carried back to the wellhouse. Along the way you will have to constantly fight with pesky dwarves and deal with an illusive but persistent pirate. You may also encounter a troll, a strange beanstalk, a very scenic volcano, and two mazes.

Each maze serves a purpose in the Original Adventure. The Vending Machine maze has an obvious purpose and is very difficult to map. You will need colored pencils if you try it. The other maze is not as complex but tricky. Even the purpose of this maze is illusive.

The 550-point version has almost twice as many rooms, with many more mazes, treasures, puzzles and dangers. You will particularly enjoy the gooseberry goblins, which can jump you and tickle you to death. The endgame is different, but all of the original 350-point rooms, treasures, and dangers are included.

Both versions have plenty of magic words that can help you in certain places. You will probably find yourself wandering through all the cave rooms, mumbling first one word and then another, trying to make things work. Pay attention to clues, as they can reduce your work. In some cases you will be asked if you want a hint. Taking the hint will cost you points. The game will also reincarnate you a few times if you meet your demise, but that will also cost you points. The best policy is to save the game occasionally and, if you get killed, restore the last game saved and continue from there.

General Strategies for Exploring

If the game is new to you, start with the 350-point version. With fewer rooms and tools to work with, the cave is still challenging, but less frustrating. When you graduate to the 550-point version, the only thing different (besides the expanded cave and additional treasures and bad guys) will be how the lamp is relit and the role of the coins. If you buy the batteries in the 550-point version, you can never trip the endgame. You should expect the lamp to run out near the end of the 550-point game and before you trip the endgame. You can relight the lamp once, but it will still run out.

Part of the puzzle is to try to figure out how to survive during this short time without falling into a pit. The keys, bird, cage, flask (550 version),

and plate (550 version) are tools used only once. The axe is a weapon. The rod is a tool, but it may need to be used three times in the expanded version. In both versions you will get a cave closing announcement before the endgame.

Map the mazes carefully. Map the main dungeon on one sheet, and each maze on a separate sheet. The ice maze (550 version) must be drawn very carefully. Keep the lines as straight as feasible and draw in all the dead ends. Examine it carefully and, if the ice maze exit is still illusive, you might try the old yoga trick of standing on your head and see if that helps.

If you get to a point in the game where nothing seems to happen in either version, this means you haven't found all the treasures. Look for clues, magic words you have not used yet, and unexplored areas of the cave.

Hints and Clues

Original 350-Point Adventure

How do I get past the snake?
Zwi xdls bqf wige kom hiz equz zwi ufqri.

How do I handle the pesky dwarves?
Zwi qai du zwi ofgk zoog zwqz bqf wige kom wili. Df zwi iaeqfsis yiludof, zwik vdgg iyifzmqggk uzoe xozwildfh kom.

What is the rod used for?
Zwi los du fiisis ofgk ofbi df zwi oldhdfqg yiludof, qfs zwi mui du oezdofqg. Df zwi iaeqfsis yiludof, kom wqs xizzil bqllk dz vwif kom yifzmli xikofs zwi bgqn loon.

What do I do about the pirate?
Pdfsdfh omz vwili zwi edlqzi riieu vwqz wi zqriu du eqlz op zwi hqni. Zwi bwiuz bqffoz xi oeifis.

How do I get the troll to let me across the bridge?
Zwili du ofi zliqumli kom bqf hdyi me qfs liboyil qhqdf, xmz foz plon zwi zlogg.

●

How do I get back across the bridge?
Zloggu qli qplqds op xiqlu.

●

How do I explore the dark area beyond the Plover Room?
Iaegoli zwi egoyil loon yilk bqlipmggk. Iyifzmqggk uonizwdfh uzlqfhi xihdfu zo wqeeif. Zlk zo pdhmli omz vwqz wqeeifu.

●

Who is the shadowy figure motioning back at me?
Kom vdgg fiis zo ugqk zwi slqhof zo pdfs zwdu omz.

●

I get to the end of the game and am still one point short.
Egobi zqi nqhqtdfi qz vdzzu ifs zo sinofuzlqzi kom wqyi xiif zwili.

Expanded Version

How do I get the sword out of the rock?

Dp kom hiz wmfhlk qfs pdfs zwi ldhwz zwdfh zo iqz kom uwomgs hqdf ifomhw uzlifhzw.

●

How do I keep my lamp from running out?
Df zwi oldhdfqg yiludof, kom vdgg fiis zo pdfs uoni xqzzildiu. Df zwi iaeqfsis yiludof, ofi loon hdyiu kom q bgmi. Dp kom lmf omz op gdhwz qpzil libwqlhdfh df zwi iaeqfsis yiludof, kom wqs xizzil pdfs q loon vdzw gdhwz qfs uzqk zwili mfzdg zwi ifshqni du zldeeis. Df zwi iaeqfsis yiludof, kom qli ofgk qggovis uda wmfslis noyiu.

●

How do I explore the area beyond the clam room?
Xizzil zqri zwi los vdzw kom.

●

How do I get out of the fog?
D bqffoz uwis qfk gdhwz of zwdu.

●

How do I get the treasures on the far side of the chasm back?
Kom bqffoz bqllk qfkzwdfh qblouu zwi bwqun xmz zwi ldfh. Zwili du q uqpi egqbi, woviyil, zo emz zwi yqgmqxgiu.

●

How do I get past the gooseberry goblins?
Hoxgdfu qli qplqds op slqhofu ol qfkzwdfh boffibzis vdzw zwin.

●

When and where do I open the flask?
Zlk ofi op zwi loonu xikofs zwi poh pdggis loon.

●

I cannot get out of the ice maze. What do I do?
Nqe dz bqlipmggk. Zwi hqni hdyiu ofi bgmi. Zmlf zwi nqe meudsi sovf qfs goor pol q nqhdb vols.

●

What is the purpose of the platform above the volcano?
Q lis willdfh.

●

How do I open the vault?
Kom nmuz sduboyil q gqlhi qliq op zwi bqyi pdluz.

●

I am trapped at the endgame. How do I get out?
Xizzil lininxil qgg zwoui nqhdb volsu.

SPECIFICATIONS: Original Adventure

Name: Original Adventure

Type: Prose Adventure

System: CP/M, MS-DOS and others

Memory Required: (see supplier)

Price: (see supplier)

Suppliers:

Microsoft Adventure (350 points, MS-DOS)
(32K, $30)

IBM Corporation
Entry Systems Division
P.O. Box 1328
Boca Raton, FL 33432
(800) 447-4700

The Original Adventure (350 points, IBM-PC, Compaq, Columbia, Hyperion)
(64K, $24.95)

Norell Data Systems
3400 Wilshire Blvd.
P.O. Box 70127
Los Angeles, CA 90010
(213) 258-1653

Adventure (CP/M — many formats)
(48K, $19.50)

Workman and Associates
112 Marion Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91106
(818) 796-4401

Also available from various user groups and bulletin boards at no cost. The 550-point version is available from user groups only.

4

The Scott Adams Adventures

Shortly after the emergence of the popular Original Adventure for the minicomputers and mainframe computers, Scott Adams introduced a series of prose adventure games for the microcomputer that were modeled after the Original Adventure. Although the fantasy worlds were smaller and the vocabulary was limited, the same principles were incorporated. The player moved a puppet about with two-word verb/noun combinations and a variety of puzzles were incorporated in each game.

The games were originally written in BASIC, and were later compiled to a machine language. The games were sold for almost all the popular game computers of the early eighties, and were eventually compiled to a single disk for CP/M machines after being converted to CP/M by Russ Wetmore. The games are sold by Adventure International. The CP/M conversion is somewhat marginal, however, and the games will not run on all CP/M machines. It would be wise to query Adventure International before buying to be sure the games will run on your system. You can find the complete source code in BASIC for one of the games, Pirate's Adventure, in the December, 1980 issue of *BYTE*.

In the CP/M version, all games are distributed on a single disk with a shell program that calls up the desired game by number. There are twelve games on the disk, and the numbers range from 0 to B (the hexadecimal equivalent of "11"). The "0" game is a sampler and is not reviewed here.

Adventureland

This is a good beginning point for the novice adventurer, as this game is easier than successive games of the series. The game involves a fantasy trip to the countryside with a bog, lake, dragon, and bear to keep things lively. There are 13 treasures, and 29 rooms, or locations, in the countryside. Some treasures are easy to find, others are very difficult. You will also need to figure out what to do with the bear.

Pirate's Cove

This is a classic of the series with the source code, as we mentioned, published in *BYTE* in 1980. You start the game in a flat in London, but are soon transported to an island with strange characters, such as a talking parrot, a mongoose, and a drunken pirate. As part of the game, you will need to figure out how to build a ship on a deserted island. There are 25 locations and four basic areas. These areas include the London flat, the island, Treasure Island, and a never-never land. Each area consists of several rooms.

Mission Impossible

In this game you will be fighting an unknown saboteur to stop a nuclear reactor from blowing up. To further complicate the game, a bomb has been planted in your head and is ticking away. The saboteur dies before you get very far. There are 21 locations, and the three colored rooms must be entered in a special sequence to complete the game. The game is pretty tough and is recommended for the more advanced explorer.

Voodoo Castle

This game was written by Alexis Adams, and some reviewers have said it has the best story line of the series. Count Christo has been cursed, and you are the only one who can remove the curse. Starting from the chapel,

you explore the rooms and dark corridors of the Voodoo Castle. There are 24 rooms, a juju man, a book on curse removal, and a kachina doll, which is the likeness of the Count. The story is fast-moving.

The Count

In this game you must finally rid the world of the evil Count Dracula. Although there are only 19 locations, you have an added element of suspense — a race against time. Things change between night and day and between successive days. The Count must be found in a humanoid form and then overcome. At the same time, an angry crowd prevents you from abandoning your quest. You will also have a subpuzzle, which requires that you decipher the hallways.

Strange Odyssey

You are alone on an abandoned planet with a damaged spaceship. A rock contains some alien ruins and you must solve the mystery of gaining entrance to the ruins — a stargate for a new world. Once you solve the mystery of moving about in the 22 locations, you must find five treasures, fix your spaceship, and return to your home base. Four treasures are easy to find, but the fifth is a different story. You will learn where it is long before you can get it. As a clue, remember that you are trying to use objects in an alien environment.

Mystery Fun House

In a carnival atmosphere, you must try to gain access to a fun house with a hall of mirrors and find hidden secret plans. Once you figure out how to get past the gatekeeper, you will need to find a variety of treasures, explore the corridors, and get out within a time limit. The game includes 37 locations and a clever maze. This is one of the best of the series.

Pyramid of Doom

You start this game at an unexplored pyramid somewhere in Egypt. The game has 26 locations and is extremely difficult. Once you find the key, you seem to be under the watchful eyes of a strange nomad. Thirteen treasures are at various locations. One is located in a logical spot, but you cannot see it. Others are guarded by an Iron Pharoah.

Ghost Town

This one is an authentic western adventure, complete with saloon, jail, hotel, telegraph stations, Boot Hill, and a piano-playing ghost. There are 39 locations and 13 treasures, plus a game within a game. After you complete the game, try to do it again with the goal of getting the maximum number of points.

Savage Island

This game is suggested for only the most advanced adventurers. It is actually a two-part game, included on the disk as Part I (A) and Part II (B). You will need to finish Part I before you can even begin Part II, as you will need a password given in Part I for the second part. Savage Island is the most challenging game of the series.

The first part is a series of complex puzzles, with the object being to get the password for the second part. The early moves of Part I are more difficult than the later moves of the game. As a clue, remember that a little salt can cure a sick animal. The game includes pirates, UFOs, dinosaurs, and force fields. On some versions of this game, you cannot save the game during play. Since two dangerous killers range at will during the game, the lack of a save feature can make the game difficult and a player can lose interest and become frustrated.

The second part (Savage Island, Part II) is more difficult. Expect to spend about 30 minutes contemplating each move during the early part of the game. It can take several hours to get through the first five moves.

5

Zork I — The Great Underground Empire

Zork I is the first of a trilogy of Zork games. Using complete sentences to communicate your commands to Zork I, you can experience the challenges of the adventure more realistically than in any previous game. Like Original Adventure, Zork is an experience in artificial intelligence. Again like Original Adventure, commands can contain nouns and verbs. Unlike Original Adventure, commands can also contain adjectives and prepositions. The Great Underground Empire, the first game in the series, is considered a classic of prose adventure games.

You must explore a network of passages and caves, survive the perils of the empire, bring all 20 treasures to the safety of the surface, and remain alive. During the explorations you will need to deal with a dangerous thief, a vampire bat, a violent troll, a guardian Cyclops, demons, and a variety of grues.

The History of Zork

The Original Adventure attracted a cult following, but still seemed limited for many explorers. The *parser*, the part of the program that interprets the player's commands, was limited to simple verb/noun commands (as TAKE GOLD) in both the Original Adventure and in the Scott Adams Adventures. In 1977 several M.I.T. graduates teamed up with Mark Blank to develop more powerful parsers. Using artificial-intelligence programming techniques, they developed a new parser that permitted adjectives, prepo-

sitions, and compound verbs. This allowed the player to use full sentences, such as WHERE IS THE HIDDEN SAFE?, as commands.

The first game utilizing one of the new parsers was Zork, which was originally developed on a DEC System 10 at M.I.T. This original Zork game was written by Mark Blank, Tim Anderson, Bruce Daniels and Dave Lebling. It was written in a LISP-like language called MDL. Joel Berez and Scott Culter helped in later versions, and the game was converted to the FORTRAN language on a PDP-11. The game seemed to gobble up megabytes of storage on whatever computer it was run.

When the developers began to try to compress the monstrous game to run on a microcomputer, they found a tremendous challenge. The microcomputer would have only one-thousandth of the computer power of the M.I.T. computer. To meet this challenge, they developed a Zork language virtual machine. A special instruction set was developed specifically for fantasy games. Using this special language, it took only three bytes of core to move an object from one room to another. The language was called ZIL, or Zork Implementation Language, and was essentially a stripped-down version of MDL.

Zork was then written in ZIL, a language specifically designed for fantasy games. Next, a compiler was developed that converted the game in the ZIL language to the Z code, as it was called, of an imaginary or virtual machine. To play the game, an interpreter was written for the target computer used to play the game. The interpreter remains in the computer memory when the game is played and interprets the Z code. A separate interpreter was eventually written for each microprocessor on which the Zork game was to be played. Only one compiler is needed, and it is written only for the large computer on which the games are developed. This is quite similar to developing a Pascal program.

To give an example of the space saved, the original parser on the PDP-10 took 10,000 36-bit bytes. The Z code parser in the interpreter, which is better than the PDP-10 parser, takes only 3000 8-bit bytes. Once the compiler and interpreter were written, the developers had tools to develop any number of powerful games in the ZIL language. Even with this strategy, Zork was too large for the microcomputer. Eventually Zork was separated into three modules as Zork I, Zork II, and Zork III. Each is sold as a separate game for a large number of microcomputer systems. This was the beginning of Infocom, which has become the major developer of prose adventure games for the microcomputer.

Overview of Zork I

This was the first of Infocom's classic adventures to be released to the public. It is the standard for the development of modern prose adventures. The player will need to exercise a high degree of intellect and imagination to solve all the puzzles and win. Fortunately, unlike most video arcade games, you can really win.

Although the adventure is not a real-time adventure in the sense of Deadline (see Chapter 9), a timing element exists in that your lamp will only last for a fixed number of moves and slowly diminishes with each move. Other light sources include matches, candles, and a torch. One or more of these may help in giving you an extra margin of time.

You can save the game at any point, which is useful in giving you some degree of recovery in case you meet your demise. Restoring the game will put you back at the point where you saved the game, with whatever treasures and discoveries you had made up to that point.

In Zork I, time is relative. You can take as long as you wish to ponder a move. This is quite different from a graphic game or a role-playing game (as Nemesis) in which quick reflexes are often important.

The Zork I game starts near a small house (like the Original Adventure) and includes well over 100 rooms. As such, it is the largest game of the Zork series. You will need to map your way through two mazes. A generous number of formidable opponents exist, such as a troll, a thief, and a vampire bat. During the game you must even enter the Gates of Hell. You must also contend with the *other occupant* and *the lean and hungry gentleman*, who may (or may not) be the thief.

General Strategies for Exploring

Mapping is extremely important in Zork I. The underground dungeons are complex and dangerous. The dungeon and both mazes should be mapped carefully. The normal strategy in mapping mazes is to drop objects to aid in the mapping. There is an added complexity here, as a thief will meticulously follow you and pick up the treasures you leave in the maze. You will hear the thief in the background, muttering about the fine knife or sword he has found. It helps some to leave tools instead of treasures in the mapping.

Plan your moves carefully and keep the lamp off unless you really need it. If you are carrying the torch, for example, you will not need to have the lamp on. Always carry the lamp. The wandering thief may take a fancy to your treasures, and if he takes the torch (a treasure), you will need to use your lamp. The same advice goes for dropping treasures when you get overweighted and trying to recover them later. The treasure may be gone, scavenged by the thief. This can be an advantage with some treasures, as you probably cannot open the egg and will need help from somebody else. At other times it is a disadvantage, as the torch (which can help save lamp energy) is both a treasure and a tool and the thief will take it if he gets a chance.

Treasures must be safely dispatched above the ground if they are to be protected from the thief, and they must be in the trophy case to get full credit. Some treasures are tools, and must be carried again into the dungeon to gain other treasures. If the thief takes a treasure from you, this will limit your ability to get other treasures that depend on that treasure as a tool. After every encounter with the thief, be sure to use the INVENTORY command to see what you still have. Near the end, at the final encounter with the thief, you may be able to recover your treasures. Your lamp will be nearly depleted by then, and you will not be able to do much exploring after this final encounter.

Read any leaflets and papers you find about the dungeon or above the ground. Some are only advertising or a bit of humor. Others give valuable clues.

The troll is dangerous, but gets dispatched quickly at the beginning of the game. The thief is far more difficult to eliminate. You do not stand much of a chance of winning any encounter near the beginning of the game, so you might as well avoid confrontations and walk (or run) away. Later in the game, as you gain more experience, you stand a better chance of winning. Get your treasures above ground as quickly as possible, keeping only those you need as tools on specific missions. Hopefully, the thief will avoid you as much as possible until that mission is accomplished. When you have discovered everything, dispatch the thief and take his bag.

Important Locations

The House and Forest — The forest is important, at both the beginning and end of the game. You will find quite a few objects in the house, but

do not be too anxious to carry all of them underground at the start. The more tools you carry into the dungeon, the fewer treasures you can carry out.

The Coal Mine — Everything you find here is not important to the game, but you will need the coal. You will also need to figure out how to get beyond the timber room and determine the purpose of the machine there. You may not fit in the basket, but something else might.

The Dam Area — Save the game before you start pushing buttons. There are also some good tools here. You will need something beyond the Attalis Room to use the pile of plastic. Once you figure out how to explore the river, watch out for the buoy (for more than one reason) and the falls. The dam is also important in discovering one of two methods of getting the platinum bar.

The Temple — This is a dangerous area. Books have more than one page, and coffins can contain things. Also, two of the three granite walls are more than what meets the eye.

Entrance to Hades — The candles will not last too long, and doing things in the wrong order can really give you trouble here. The book will help.

Over the Rainbow — Make this trip after you have been to the temple area. What else do you find at rainbows?

The Cyclops — The book has a clue here, but the clue is carefully hidden.

Hints and Clues

How do I open the egg without damaging it?
Extax zh ruqxmwmnruq tuq exh hdx hdzxg nlxu zh.

How do I map the maze by the troll room?
Hmo qmnllzuw hnnes onr un enuwxm uxxq. Hdx hdzxg, dncxaxm, czee shzee kx t lmnkexi.i Hdxmx tmx hcxuho-hcn mnnis tuq hdmxx xpzhs.

●

What do I do with the skeleton?
Extax zxh tuq hdx fuzgx tenux. Htfx nueo hdx ktw ng ynzus.

●

How do I get past the Cyclops?
Hdxmx zs t yerx zu hdx ketyf knnf. Ennf th hdx gzmsh exhhxm ng xtyd ezux.

●

How do I get the platinum bar?
Hdxmx tmx hcn snerhznus zu ethxm jnmf mxextsxs. Hdx lmxgxmmxq snerhxnu zs hn extmu dnc hdx qti cnmfs tuq itfx hdx mnni exss unzso. Zg onr ezfx hdx xtso cto nrh, hdxmx zs t inmx itwzyte snerhznu.

●

How do I enter Hades?
Onr czee uxxq hdmxx hnnes — hdx kxee, knnf, tuq ytuqex. Rsx hdx kxee, hdxu hdx ytuqex, hdxu hdx knnf. Onr czee tesn uxxq snix cto hn ezwdh hdx ytuqex.

●

How do I get out of the temple area?
Cdth qn onr qn th tehtms? Onr ytu tesn wxh nrh ko sneazuw hdx wmtuzhx ctee lrjjex.

●

How is the dam operated?
Xplxmzixuh czhd hdx krhhnus, hdxu ydxyf hdx qti. Onr czee tesn uxxq hdx cmxuyd.

●

What is the pile of plastic good for?
Hmo hdx lril, cdzyd onr czee gzuq tghxm onr extmu hn rsx hdx izmmnm.

●

Can I cross the rainbow?
Zg onr dtax hdx mzwdh hnnes, onr ytu qn tuohdzuw. Hmo snix fzuq ng ctug. Hdxmx ito xaxu kx t lnh ng wneq gnm onr.

●

How do I get past the bat?
Atilzmx kths dthx wtmezy.

●

How do I get beyond the timber room?
Unhdzuw ytu kx ytmmzxq kxonuq hdx hzikxm mnni, krh hdxmx zs tunhdxm cto hn wxh nkbxyhs hdxmx.

●

What is the machine in the coal mine for?
Cxee, ynte irsh kx wnnq gnm snixhdzuw!

●

How do I get out of the dungeons?
Hdxmx tmx szp xpxhs. Onr ytu ytmmo nux nkbxyh rl hdx ydziuxo czhd onrm etil. Zg onr rsx tuo ng ndx nhdxm xpxhs, hdx hmtl qnnm czee un enuwxm yensx kxdzuq onr.

SPECIFICATIONS: Zork I

Name: Zork I

Type: Prose Adventure

System: almost all computers (MS-DOS: PC, Compaq, XT)

Memory Required: 48K-64K for CP/M, 48K for IBM PC

Price: $39.95 (CP/M) or $49.95 (MS-DOS)

Manufacturer: Infocom
55 Wheeler Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02138
(800) 262-6868

6

Zork II

ork II is a prose adventure from Infocom that is a continuation of Zork I. Like all Infocom games, full sentences with adjectives and prepositions are permitted. Zork, as a classic adventure game, is considered one of the most challenging, creative, and entertaining of all prose adventures. This is the second part of the three-part adventure. Although the other parts are not needed to play Zork II, the games are somewhat interrelated, with some objects and rooms appearing in more than one game.

The game is designed for adults and is beyond the skills of many younger children, who generally prefer visual graphics and sounds. To successfully complete the game, you will need plenty of creativity. In Zork II, you will have to deal with a light source that gradually gets weaker and also the puzzle of how the scoring is accomplished. You can save the game at any point, restarting later from where you left your adventure.

The objective is to find all 400 points of the treasures, solve the various puzzles, and discover the door to Zork III, the final part of the journey. Along the way you will meet a wizard several times and, finally, a demon who will demand all of your treasures. If you are successful, you become Master of the Domain, seizing control from the senile Wizard of Frobozz.

Overview

Zork II is famous for its carousel. As it confuses directions and makes play difficult, you should try to discover fairly early in the game how to stop it. To do this, you will need to solve a riddle and get to the Alice area. You will probably play for many hours before learning how to stop the carousel. You will see very little of the rooms of Zork I. The only thing you might see from the first game will be the little white house, and that only briefly, from a great distance.

There are eight basic areas or scenarios that must be completed. There are some relationships between these scenarios, and the order of completing each is important for successful completion. There is only one maze, and it is small and cannot be mapped. There are over 70 rooms, making the dungeon slightly smaller than the one in Zork I, but still quite formidable. The order in which the areas are described here does not necessarily reflect the order in which the scenarios should be completed.

Expect the game to move slowly until you solve the riddle and slay the dragon. After that, you will find the game moves faster. Save the game often, particularly before negotiating with the demon near the end of the game.

Important Locations

The Alice Area — Most buckets go down if you pour water into them. This one goes up. Or is the well upside down? Be sure to read the writing on anything before you eat it, as it might be dangerous to your health. You should be able to find something to help you do this near the food. There is one treasure here and one tool that you will need elsewhere.

The Volcano Area — You should be able to figure out what the strange device is at the bottom of the volcano and how it can help you up the volcano. You should also be able to get back down alive. There are two treasures here, but you will need a tool from elsewhere to get one. The books make good reading.

The Bank Area — The curtain can lead you to any of four areas. The choice is not random, but is based on a very simple rule. Your problem is to find the rule so you can get the treasures out. There are two treasures here.

The Wizard's Workshop — You'll need all the treasures before you can do much in this area. Don't let the wizard's trophy case divert you. Several good puzzles remain to be solved in this area, and while you are here you should manage to discover the final sphere and what to do with it.

The Dragon's Lair — Avoid this area early in the game, but bravely enter the lair after gaining a little experience. The rewards are worth the danger.

The Tiny Room — One of the strange spheres in the game will be here. The spheres will challenge your curiosity. You will need to find two more spheres in order to obtain the fourth and final sphere.

The Garden — The illusive unicorn with the key will keep you busy for hours. Solve other puzzles first. The tools here are important for other areas.

The Crypt — This is the final part of the game. Entry requires that you complete the small maze and snare the wizard's wand.

Advice from the Experts

Collect a few tools from the gazebo at the start and try some of the easier tasks as answering the riddle and exploring the Alice area (use the form ANSWER "XXXX") until you have gained some experience. Then challenge the dragon and solve the mysteries of the depository and volcano. Save the wizard's workshop and the area beyond the oddly angled room for late in the game.

Keep track of where you store your treasures and tools. Save the game often, as some areas are dangerous. You will need all the treasures near the end of the game in the final encounter with the demon and the wizard. Don't worry about the wizard until then. He is troublesome, but there is not much you can do to avoid him until you have all the treasures and can get his wand.

Conserve lantern power. There is a way to get help if you run out of lantern power, but there are some side effects. Don't worry too much about your score. If you find the door to Zork III, you made it to the end of the game. The score can vary, depending upon the quality of your game playing (such as whether reincarnation was necessary).

Hints and Clues

Can the carousel be stopped?
Dzjwo pa jcw hztw vlk yza qjlr pj, dwzupah vlk jl za kaupqylmwowu ollt.

What is the brick used for?
Gpjc jcw qjopah, vlk yza hwj z jowzqkow kr jcw mldyzal.

How do I get in the tiny room?
Jcw xwv pq paqpuw jcw ullo. Rkqc pj lkj zau kqw za ldu jopyx jl owylmwo jcw uolrrwu xwv.

How do I kill the dragon?
Gczj czrrwaq gcwa vlk zjjzyx jcw uozhla zau dwzmw jcw ollt? Ul alj ul jcpq jll wzodv pa jcw hztw, clgwmwo.

How do I get the key from the unicorn?
Spau jcw ropaywqq spoqj zau ul cwo z szmlo.

How do I move the menhir?
Vlk gpdd awwu jcw gpfzou'q gzaj slo jczj, zau vlk gpdd alj hwj jcpq kajpd mwov dzjw pa jcw hztw.

What do I use the club for?
Pj pq z ydkw jl jcw kuudv zahwdwu ollt. Jcwow zow ljcwo ydkwq pa jcw zowz zq gwdd.

What is the flask used for?
Pj pq ladv z jlld zau yza nw kqwu jl owzu jcw gopjpah la jcw yzxw.

How do I get the final sphere?
Ps
twjcpah pq ydwzo, pj pq pampqpndw kauwo gzjwo.

I know where the final sphere is, but still can't get it. Why?
Nowzx jcw hdzqq.

How do I get the wand?
Hpmw jcw uwtla zdd vlko jowzqkowq.

How do I get out of the volcano?
Gczj hlwq kr tkqj yltw ulga.

I am at the endgame and see no door to Zork III.
Gwdd, vlk czu nwjjwo qzmw vlko dztr wawohv zau jzxw z yczahw la z hokw hwjjpah vlk.

SPECIFICATIONS: Zork II

Name: Zork II

Type: Prose Adventure

System: almost all computers (MS-DOS: IBM PC, XT, Compaq)

Memory Required: 48K-64K for CP/M, 48K for IBM PC

Price: $39.95 (CP/M) or $49.95 (MS-DOS)

Manufacturer: Infocom
55 Wheeler Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02138
(800) 262-6868

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Zork III

Zork III is the final quest in the Zork trilogy. There is no Zork IV, and completing Zork III completes the adventure. The challenge is formidable, and in many ways this is the best game of the trilogy. Finding the objective in Zork III is part of the puzzle. To successfully win, you must find the secret purpose of the Dungeon Master, who will watch your final triumph or destruction in the ultimate conclusion.

Overview

As in a dream, you see yourself tumbling down a great, dark stairway. All about you are shadowy images of struggles against fierce opponents and diabolical traps. These give way to another round of images — imposing stone figures, a cool, clear lake, and an old, but oddly youthful man.

He turns toward you slowly, his long, silver hair dancing about him in a fresh breeze. "You have reached the final test, my friend. You have proved clever and powerful, yet this is not enough. Seek me when you feel yourself worthy!" His words echo as the dream dissolves around you. . .

You are at the bottom of a seemingly endless stair, winding itself upward beyond sight. An eerie light coming from all around you casts strange shadows on the walls. To the south is a dark, winding trail. Your old friend, the brass lantern, is at your feet.

As you start, you will find a sword embedded in a rock. You can try as hard as you wish, but you will not be able to wrestle it free and you will only get a few humorous comments if you try. Leaving the sword and venturing on, you will find in a short while that an ominous rumbling shakes the entire cavern.

If you can find the maze, you will also find yourself in a fight with a strange, hooded figure. The fight is difficult, and you may barely escape with your life. The first time you play the game, you will probably miss the entire purpose of the encounter and accomplish very little before the ominous rumbling.

The game will seem, at times, to run in real-time mode like Deadline (see Chapter 9). The perception is deceiving, as there is no clock ticking and no demand on the user to complete the game in a defined period of time. You will find, however, that time is an important dimension in the solution of the game.

There are very few treasures around the cave, and the illusion of treasure hunting that the game may project to the player is a trap for the Zork III player. In Zork III, gaining treasures is not the goal and can even get you into trouble. The purpose is much more intriguing, and the scoring system is a red herring.

As you play, you are soon aware that someone is watching you. A character may appear on the cliff as you try to open a chest on the ledge below. As you become frustrated and find that your key does not work, the friendly stranger on the cliff offers to help. You will need to decide whether you want the stranger's help and how much to trust your new friend.

You will find three machines in the museum, but only one of these will work. You had better save the game before using this machine, as it can get you into plenty of trouble.

The cave is approximately the same size as Zork II (a little over 70 rooms) and includes one maze, as well as an interesting Royal Puzzle, which is a separate and unusual type of maze.

General Strategies for Exploring

The ominous rumbling occurs after about 100 moves. You should find out the cause of this rumbling as quickly as possible. After the rumbling, the topology of the cave will change. There are some things you need to

do before this occurs, and some things after it occurs. Expect to play the game many times before you discover what is happening.

You will play many hours of Zork III before you begin to understand the objective of the game. The illusive objective, and the quality of the objective once discovered, makes this one of the best of the prose adventure games. You will also discover that figuring out how the scoring works is a part of the puzzle. There seem to be only seven points, or potentials (as the game calls them). When you request your score you will get cryptic messages, such as "YOUR POTENTIAL IS 3 OUT OF A POSSIBLE 7 IN 312 MOVES." Trying to find out what trips this point counter may or may not help you learn the objective of the game. The scoring does have a meaning, but you can get all seven points without solving all of the puzzles or completing the game.

You do not need to have played Zork I or Zork II to enjoy Zork III, but you will find some relationships between the games. Playing Zork III, you will briefly find yourself at locations that were a part of Zork I or Zork II. This includes the sacrificial altar and the demons, but only one of these locations relates to your needs in Zork III. Hints and clues given in earlier games may be helpful in Zork III.

Hints and Clues

What do I do with the hooded figure?
Gmhj ahqq zb puib uzehukj sj duk cshw bvrbihbwlb.

How does the scoring work?
Gmbib sib jbebw bwlukwgbij, bewgj ui slluprqhjmpbwgj gmsg lsw gihr gmb ruhwg lukwgbi. S ruhwg hj chebw bslm ghpb duk zbchw s wba rsgm gmsg lsw qbso duk gu slluprqhjmhwc rsig ux gmb uzyblgheb. Duk lsw mseb sqq ux gmb ruhwgj ahgmukg juqehwc swd rknnqb ui pbbghwc swd rsig ux gmb uzyblgheb.

How do I get the shiny object in the lake?
Tbbr gidhwc.

How do I get the lamp beyond the lake?
Amd ou duk wbbo gmb qspr ui guilm zbduwo gmb qstb? Amd ou duk wbbo swd qhcmg jukilb gmbib? Hj gmbib swugmbi juqkghuw ahgmukg s qhcmg jukilb?

●

What do I do with the timber and coal?
Duk lswwug ou swdgmhwc ahgm gmbjb ui cbg gmbjb zslt. Gmhj hj wug nuit hh.

●

What do I do on the beach?
Quut xui s jshqui.

●

Can I trust the man on the cliff?
Mb msj uwqd tbd. Duk ahqq mseb gu gstb duki lmswlbj.

●

How do I get the treasure in the chest?
Amsg ou duk aswg, gmb gibsjkib ui gmb jgsxx? Duk lswwug mseb zugm.

●

What is in the vial?
Quut hw gmb phiiui sxgbi duk oihwt hg.

●

How do I use the slot in the Royal Puzzle?
Seuho kjhwc hg.

●

What are the machines used for?
Uwqd uwb ux gmbp auitj, swo hg hj s ghpb pslmhwb.

●

How do I get the jewels?
Cbgghwc gibsjkib hj wug gmb cusq ux nuitt hhh, swo lsw cbg duk hw giukzqb. Duk wbbo uwqd gmb ihwc. Rkjm gmb cuqo pslmhwb gu gmb ybabq iuup swo cu zslt hw ghpb gu zbxuib gmb jblkihgd jdjgbp hj hwjgsqqbo. Gstb gmb ihwc swo mhob hg kwobi gmb jbsg ambib hg ahqq zb jsxb xui sqpujg gau mkwoibo dbsij.

●

How do I get beyond the engravings room?
Jmua jupb luprsjjhuw uw gmb uqo psw. Amsg hi mhj wbbo?

●

How do I get beyond the mirror box?
Gmb siiua ruhwgj hw gmb ohiblghuw gmb psmucswd rswbq xslbj. Gmb rhwb rswbq hg gmb bvhg. Ishjb gmb jmuig ruqb swo rkjm gmb ibo asqq kwghq gmb zuv hj ruhwghwc hw gmb ihcmg ohiblghuw swo gmbw rkjm gmb rhwb rswbq.

●

How do I get past the guardians?
Gmbd ahqq wughlb duki ribjbwlb hx duk zibst gmb phiiui, auzzqb bmg zuv, ui urbw gmb ouui guasio gmbp. Uwb juqkghuw hj gu pstb dukijbqx hwehjhzqb. Gmbib hj sqju swugmbi juqkghuw.

●

How do I satisfy the old man at the door?
Oho duk wughlb amsg mb hj absihwc?

SPECIFICATIONS: Zork III

Name: Zork III

Type: Prose Adventure

System: almost all computers (MS-DOS: PC, Compaq, XT)

Memory Required: 48K-64K for CP/M, 48K for IBM PC

Price: $39.95 (CP/M) or $49.95 (MS-DOS)

Manufacturer: Infocom
55 Wheeler Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02138
(800) 262-6868

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Enchanter

For those who braved the powers of darkness and survived Infocom's Zork, a new and even more challenging adventure series awaits — Enchanter. Of all the Infocom games, Enchanter, the first in this series, quickly became my favorite. There is no beastly fighting, swords, or armor used to deal with the powers of darkness in this game — you are only a neophyte Merlin and must challenge an evil so strong no other sorcerer will attempt the quest. The game was written by Infocom heroes Marc Blank and Dave Lebling and reflects the best humor, puzzles, and adventure characteristic of these authors.

Overview

Here again you will have sorcerers, warlocks, medieval stories, magic, heroes, and unfathomable evil. As the game begins, you are a wizard third class who is just out of sorcerer's school. To top this off, you almost flunked out of your sorcerer's school. The world faces a deadly threat from the evil warlock Krill. The Circle of Enchanters chose you for the mission for a specific reason. All of the best wizards would be instantly recognized by Krill's powerful mindprobe that surrounds the castle. You, on the other hand, are so insignificant that you may be undetected by the probe. Take it from the author, you will have a terrible time being a hero in this game. By the time this author figured out the purpose of the Burma Shave signs

in this story, he was miles from the castle and almost dying of thirst and laughter. A high sense of humor and fun constantly prevails throughout the game.

You start the game with a spell book thoughtfully provided by the Circle of Enchanters. You also have a beautiful scroll describing the mission, which was given to you by the Circle, and a Guild Directory. The spells you find in the spell book as you travel along the way enable you to perform the magic. There are no swords, armor, or other weapons here. If you can't make it with the spells, you will never see tomorrow. Unfortunately, you can only memorize a few spells at a time (you never were very good in school), and as soon as you use a spell you forget it until you can memorize it again. Of course, if it is dark you can't read the spell book to memorize anything. The best approach is to memorize those spells every morning while you eat your breakfast.

The game appears to run in a real-time mode. The sun comes up in the morning and goes down in the evening and the stars and moon come out. Rats scurry at your feet, flies buzz about, and even a dog can cross your path. You will need to eat, drink, and sleep at times or you will have difficulty using your spells and will lose your health.

The Spells

You can expect to start with some rather common, but perhaps strange spells:

Gnusto — You can use this spell to write other spells in your spell book. It is useful for recording new spells you find along the quest. Once a spell is written in your spell book, you can rememorize it to use again. Otherwise, your new spell will work only once.

Blorb — Protects one small object as though you had put it in a strong box. Unfortunately, once an object is so protected you can't move it around very easily.

Frotz — Causes something to give off light.

Nitfol — You play Dr. Dolittle and talk with the animals.

As you get further into the game, you will gain a few new spells. Here are a few of these:

Rezrov — You open locked or enchanted objects. Very handy, and it can be used repeatedly.

Kulcad — Dispells a magic spell (very powerful).

Exex — Makes things move very fast.

Krebf — Repairs damage. Useful for getting another spell.

Cleesh — Turns beings into frogs.

Vaxum — Makes a hostile creature your friend.

Zifmia — Summons other beings.

Once a spell is written in your spell book, it can be used again and again. With some spells, however, you will find it beyond your limited power to write them to your spell book. You can use the spell if you find it on a scroll, but once used it is gone. Remember that you can only memorize a few spells at a time, and after a spell is used you will forget it and must memorize it again.

Enchanter: Advice from the Experts

We are not going to give much of this excellent game away. We will say that you will find some cannibals and will wonder who will eat whom. You will get the first few points without difficulty, but the going gets tough after that. The more difficult puzzles involve the illusions cast by the warlock to confuse you while you try to avoid the strange beasts. As you eventually find your way to the dark tower, you will sense the presence of pure evil itself, and you must deal with this presence before you can confront and defeat Krill. This final endgame is one of Infocom's best puzzles. The game will challenge even the best of the Zork wizards, as well as the D&D enthusiasts who like role-playing and magic.

Sorcerer

Sorcerer is the second game in the Enchanter series, and is written by Steve Meretzky. This game contains a vocabulary of over 1000 words, the largest vocabulary of any Infocom game. You will know a lot about the Enchanter universe before you have completed this game.

As recognition of your skills in defeating the warlock Krill, you will be made a member of the prestigious Circle of Enchanters. As the game begins, Belboz, the eldest of the Circle and the most powerful enchanter in the land, has disappeared. Since it isn't like Belboz to take a vacation without telling the Circle, there are rumors that Belboz has been captured by an evil force and his magic turned against the Circle. Only you can rescue him from this terrible fate.

You will find the game starts with a bang. At first, you don't see the normal Infocom copyright notice and serial number. You are in a strange forest with a hellhound racing at you with rows of razor-sharp teeth. If you dare climb a nearby tree to escape, a giant boa constrictor is slithering along the branch toward you. Fortunately, you quickly discover this is all a bad dream. Then you see the familiar Infocom logo. You wake up in the Guild Hall, which seems deserted except for a short note from Frobar. Frobar has taken the apprentices into town to shop for a picnic. Belboz has disappeared. A few dozen moves later, you'll find yourself in deep trouble.

Sorcerer: Advice from the Experts

This game is loaded with red herrings. You will find not one, but many to throw you off. Get out the Guild Hall first, then solve the above ground puzzles of the river and the fort. Then find a coin to get by the toll gate and solve the puzzle of the glass maze. Finally, try the amusement park and the endgame. The Infotater is a very critical part of the game. Use it often for hints and clues.

Hints and Clues

Enchanter

How do I keep from getting sacrificed?
Pji qfrrjs fnjlu ls, ois pji qfr emjsdqs pjimadhg. Ajhnd std ejmsmfls mjjw eibbhd glmas.

●

For what use is the silver spoon?
Ls wfkda fr dxqdhhdrs mdu tdmmlrc.

●

How do I get the scroll from the egg intact?
Smp std kmdog aedhh gmjw std gjmdas aqmjhh.

●

How do I get the scroll from the Control Room?
Smp sj glru fr frlwfh ytj qfr tdhe. Td ylhh gjhhjy pji jm gjhhjy pjim ulmdqsljra.

●

How do I solve the puzzle of the Translucent Room?
Pji ylhh rddu std wfe, std edrqlh, fru ajwd lrgjmwfsljr gmjw f ojjk lr std hlomfmp.

●

Of what use is the adventurer?
Qfr pji cds tla fssdrsljr? ytfs la tla cjfh? La pjim cjfh std afwd?

Sorcerer

How do I get out of the Guild Hall?
Wcx fkaa jtty mnt kjbcmvmts.

●

Of what use is the cannon?
Wcx fkaa jtty mnt kjbcmvmts.

●

How do I pay the gnomes?
Baw vscxjy rcdt bksrm.

What is common with the mined field, the vial in the cave, and the vial by the torture chamber?
Mntw vst vaa sty ntsskjir.

How do I solve the glass maze?
Ic bvmmw.

SPECIFICATIONS: Enchanter

Name: Enchanter

Type: Prose Adventure — medieval fantasy

System: almost all computers (MS-DOS: PC, Compaq, XT)

Memory Required: 48K-64K for CP/M, 48K for IBM PC

Price: $49.95 (CP/M) or $59.95 (MS-DOS)

Manufacturer: Infocom
55 Wheeler Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02138
(800) 262-6868

SPECIFICATIONS: Sorcerer

Name: Sorcerer

Type: Prose Adventure — medieval fantasy

System: almost all computers (MS-DOS: PC, Compaq, XT)

Memory Required: 48K-64K for CP/M, 48K for IBM PC

Price: $49.95 (CP/M) or $59.95 (MS-DOS)

Manufacturer: Infocom
55 Wheeler Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02138
(800) 262-6868

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Mystery Adventures: Deadline and Witness

Deadline and Witness, prose adventures from Infocom, have at least four distinctions from most prose adventure games. First, they are very good mysteries and not just fantasy games. Second, they are open-ended. As you play these games in different ways, you will discover a variety of endings. Third, they have time limitations. You have 12 hours (of fantasy time) to solve each of the mysteries. Finally, the characters in the game that you meet have very definite personalities, and their personalities influence the direction of the game. Like other Infocom games, you can use complete sentences as commands, you can save the game at any given point for restarting from that point, and a large amount of creativity is necessary to achieve a good ending. Both games have fairly small worlds (or maps) in comparison with other adventure games, in order to save plenty of memory room for the highly interactive play.

Deadline

Mr. Marshall Robner, the industrialist and philanthropist, was found dead yesterday morning in his home. Although the death appears to be a suicide, the lawyers probating his estate feel a complete investigation should be undertaken because of the size of the Robner estate. You, as Chief of

Detectives for the local police, have been requested by the law firm to conduct this investigation. The law firm has made arrangements with Mrs. Robner for you to spend a day at the Robner estate to conduct your investigation. Your job is to explore the estate, interview the suspects, collect evidence, and identify and arrest the killer in 12 hours (Deadline hours, that is).

Included with the game is a dossier-like folder with a summary of the interviews to get you started, an 8×10 glossy photograph of the crime scene, and actual samples of some tablets found near the body. Mr. Robner may have been murdered, and there are plenty of suspects. Reading the documents may give you clues, a possible motive, and some ideas to begin your investigation.

As you start the game, you are at the entrance to the Robner estate. Mrs. Robner greets you at the door. The time is 8:00 A.M., and you have 12 hours to find the murderer and bring him (or her) to justice. Your pursuit is dangerous, and if done improperly can result in your own demise. As the game proceeds, you will see the Deadline clock ticking away on your screen. The 12 hours are not real-time hours, but fantasy hours. Of course, you can always restart the game (and the clock) or save the game (and clock time) to continue at a later time.

One of the most interesting aspects of this game is the high level of interaction with the players and events. The phone actually rings at 9:06 A.M., and you must decide what to do about the ringing telephone. You can leave it alone, answer it, pick the phone up after someone else answers it, or whatever else you do with telephones. Unlike most adventure games, characters in the estate have very definite personalities. Some are helpful, some are suspicious, and some are just plain apathetic.

The command repertoire is rich, and full sentence commands can be used. You can ask the suspects questions, follow them about, or even ask their help in finding objects. As you interact with characters, what you do can influence how they act. One character may be removing evidence from somewhere while you question another, so the order in which you conduct your investigation is important. Suspects may lie or tell you the truth, and what they say may depend on how you phrase your questions to them. What may seem to be apathy when you show an object to a person may be a very clever act to conceal some knowledge.

Each of the characters, for one reason or another, could be the murderer:

Mrs. Robner — The widow. Her personality has changed recently from outgoing to very irritable and restless. She goes out a lot at night, apparently with a friend.

George Robner — The spoiled child of the Robners. He appears to gain the most financially from his father's death. There is a rumor that Mr. Robner changed his will recently. Finding a new will would make George a prime suspect.

Mr. Baxter — Mr. Robner's business partner for 25 years. With the corporation in financial trouble, there might be some motive for Baxter to have killed Mr. Robner, if supporting evidence could be found.

Mr. McNabb — The gardener. He has a strange fixation about his roses.

Ms. Rourke — The secretary. She appears to have no apparent motive. Still, her association with Baxter and Robner and the failing company makes her an important suspect.

Ms. Dunbar — The housekeeper. She seems to have a lot of information about the household, but appears beyond suspicion.

The library is a very important room for more than one reason. You may need some help, however, from someone else to discover certain things about the library. Sometimes, while questioning a suspect, you can force that person to panic and show you things about the house you did not know.

Mr. Robner's will is read at noon, and you should attend the reading. This is also a good chance to watch reactions and to interview people. You will probably not have the case completed by then, but you should have some good ideas. This is a more dangerous game for you (as the detective) than Witness, although you can be killed in either game.

Witness

This is an intriguing who-done-it set in the thirties and is authored by Stu Galley. The New Deal has finally taken hold and Hitler is making

news. You're the Chief Police Detective on the outskirts of Los Angeles, and you've got a job to do. Mrs. Linder, a renowned society dame, has just been found dead — an apparent suicide. Her husband is evidently getting bilked by a two-bit drifter with whom she was having an affair. The old man appears to have gotten a note saying he is about to be put into the deep six by this drifter, and he calls you in for some help. The time is late Friday in February, 1938. It is raining hard.

> *In this climate, cold is anywhere below about fifty degrees. Storm clouds are swimming across the sky, their bottoms glowing faintly from the city lights in the distance. . .*
>
> *A taxi has just dropped you off at the entrance to the Linder's driveway. The driver didn't seem to like venturing into this maze of twisty streets any more than you did. But the house windows are full of light, and the radio music drifts toward you. . .*

You soon find a strange lot of characters who don't seem too helpful, except for Mr. Linder. Phong, the butler, is not the kind of guy you would want to wrestle if you ever had to put handcuffs on him. Dark and Asian, he seems about 50. Monica, the daughter, is getting ready for a date with some guy named Terry and acts as though your were a masher who just gave her a whistle.

Linder takes you to his office and begins to show you the note he received from this drifter he calls Styles. Just as you begin to get somewhere with Linder, the window breaks, a shot rings out, and Linder is dead.

You are the witness to this crime. You will panic, of course, the first time you play the game. You may even get killed yourself if you are in the wrong place at that time (I did). You heard Linder yell "Styles" just as the shot rang out and you saw a face at the window. It will take a little time to open the outside office door, and by then Styles is gone. You've got a dead body on your hands, and only a few clues to get you started. You've got twelve hours to solve the crime.

Like Deadline, you will start the case with a dossier. You should read everything in the dossier before starting, but you won't find many clues. The package includes the matchbook you found on the ground outside the house, an issue of the *National Detective Gazette* (February, 1938), a newspaper dated February 1, 1938 describing Mrs. Linder's suicide, the suicide note, and the telegram Linder sent you. From there, you are on your own. Sargent Duffy (as in Deadline) is ever ready to help you analyze footprints

or fingerprints, or arrest your suspect. The game is open-ended, and you will enjoy playing it in a variety of ways and exploring the various endings. Like Deadline, if you get one of the better endings you will get a complete summary of the the details of the case.

General Strategies for Mystery Games

Read the material that comes with the game carefully before starting. Develop some general strategies based on the possible motives you see in this material, the opportunity a suspect had, and how you think the murder may have been committed. *To win the game, you must establish method, motive, and opportunity.*

As you start, map the estate. The map has less complexity than most adventure games. Mark where you find various objects on the map. This will take time and you may wish to skip this step on subsequent games after you create the map. It will also take you some time to learn how to use the vocabulary, as it is slightly different from a regular adventure game. A verb list is shown in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1 Mystery Game Vocabulary

ACCUSE	FIND	READ	TAKE
ANALYZE	FINGERPRINT	RESTART	TIME
ANSWER	FOLLOW	RESTORE	TURN
ARREST	GIVE	REVISION	UNSCRIPT
ASK	HELP	RING	VERBOSE
BRIEF	HIDE	RUB	WAIT
CALL	INVENTORY	SAVE	WAKE
CLEAN	KNOCK	SCRIPT	WHAT IS
CLOSE	LISTEN	SEARCH	WHERE IS
COMPARE	LOCK	SHOW	
CONFRONT	LOOK AROUND	SIT	
CONTINUE	OPEN	SMELL	
DROP	PUT	SUPERBRIEF	
EXAMINE	QUIT	SUSPEND	

Note: This is a partial listing of the verb vocabulary only. The full vocabulary is about 600 words. Verbs can be reversed (as UNLOCK, instead of LOCK) and combined with prepositions and nouns. Notice that the following sentence would NOT be valid:

Tell me about Mrs. Linder

This should be rephrased as:

Ask about Mrs. Linder

Your questions should always be directed to a specific person if you are not already talking to someone specific. For example:

Styles

(Styles will do something to acknowledge your query.)

Ask about Mrs. Linder

You can send anything to the crime lab for fingerprinting or analysis. Remember, however, that as you find evidence it could mark you as a target for murder. The discovery of evidence also may mark someone else as a target for murder, so you may have a second murder on your hands if you are not careful enough. You will have better luck on analysis if you tell the laboratory what to analyze an object for or ask for a careful search or analysis. For example:

Search Phong for gun

is better than:

Search Phong

Although time is an element, the clock only changes in response to a query or input. You can also use a WAIT command to simply pass time. You can also use the WAIT UNTIL command if you wish to wait for a particular event, as for Sargent Duffy to return.

Both games have a Sargent Duffy who mysteriously appears when you need something analyzed. After the analysis is completed, he will return with the report. He can also help with some clues, but if you ask for too much help on clues he (instead of you) will get the credit for solving the case in the final investigative report. Try playing the game with a spouse or friend. This is much more fun than playing alone and you will reach the solution quicker.

You will need to act and work as a professional detective to reach the better solutions. For example, if a sheet of notepaper you need is missing from a notepad and destroyed, how could you find the contents of that missing note? Books, newspapers, and calendars all have more than one page. Turn pages and read everything carefully.

Be courteous in interviewing suspects. Knock on a door before entering. Avoid shouting long requests to people from a distance. Call their name first if they are some distance from you and you wish them to stop, walk toward them, and then start your interview. People will only answer two types of questions: questions about someone or something; and questions about the location of a person or thing. Remember that a person may not be telling you the truth. Each character has a specific personality, and it can change during the game (as the Deadline gardener). You can also use the FOLLOW command to follow a suspect. (For fun in Witness, try to follow an inanimate object.) You can also hide and watch what happens in a room.

Be sure you have a good case before arresting your suspect. You might wish to ACCUSE your suspect first. Both games have several endings, and you should try for the best possible ending. It is possible to finish Deadline without a second murder. If you do a brilliant piece of detective work, both games will give you a summary of the case at the end with all the fine details.

Hints and Clues

Deadline

Is there a safe, and if so where is it?
Jgapjg zx tbg unmg. Jgt bzi myxgt cd xbaqzkj bzi xaigtbzkj tbet qznn zkupzizketg bzi.

I still cannot find the safe. What do I do now?
Jgapjg qznn kat ngev dam ta tbg xehg zh bg fkaqx dam ept qetubzkj. Dam qznn kggv ta bzvg kgep ztx nauetzak.

What is Mr. McNabb upset about?
Exf bzi ecamt tbg paxgx. Goeizkg tbg epge. Ekendlg qbet dam hzkv sgpd uepghmnnd. Tgnn tbg nec qbet ta naaf hap.

●

What do I do with the lab report?
Hzkv amt qbd vmkcep ekv ceotgp jgt kgpsamx qbgk dam xbaq tbgi tbg pgyapt.

●

What about the telephone?
Zh tbg uenn zx zktgppmytgv, yzuf my tbg ybakg ejezk e nzttng netgp.

●

What is important about the newspaper?
Qetub hap tbg tpzufd qapvzkj ak tbg jeig vgxupzytzak.

Witness

What are the buttons used for?
Kdx ojhwi kgv yrrhev fokkyw fvrydv swq srkvd kgv podqvd swq sishw poeg lskvd hw kgv vuvwhwi.

●

Is the matchbook useful?
Wyk poeg. Xyo phigk kdx ky mgywv kgv fdsjj lskwvdw.

●

What good is the mystery book?
Qhq xyo rhwq kgv dvewhmk?

●

How can I get successful searches from uncooperative people?
Xyo psx wvvq kgv gswqeorrj, fok xyo gsq fvkkvd gsuv s dvsjyw. Kgv vzevmkhyw hj s jvsdeg ryd kgv gyojv nvxj, cgheg sdv vsjx ky ivk rdyp mgywi srkvd kgv podqvd.

●

What is important about the clocks?
Vzsphwv kgv yrrhev elyen fvrydv swq srkvd kgv qvskg.

●

What is important about the house windows?
Vzsphwv sll chwqycj, msdkheolsdlx kgv yrrhev chwqyc srkvd kgv jgyykhwi.

●

Is the workshop important?
Xyo phigk kdx ky fv kgvdv cgvw kgv ihdl eypvj hw.

●

Are the footprints useful?
Xyo esw psnv esjkj yr fykg jvkg jwkj hr xyd sdv fsdvrol.

SPECIFICATIONS: Deadline

Name: Deadline

Type: Prose Adventure — mystery

System: almost all computers (MS-DOS: PC, Compaq, XT)

Memory Required: 48K-64K for CP/M, 48K for IBM PC

Price: $49.95 (CP/M) or $59.95 (MS-DOS)

Manufacturer: Infocom
55 Wheeler Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02138
(800) 262-6868

SPECIFICATIONS: Witness

Name: Witness

Type: Prose Adventure — mystery

System: almost all computers (MS-DOS: PC, Compaq, XT)

Memory Required: 48K-64K for CP/M, 48K for IBM PC

Price: $49.95 (CP/M) or $59.95 (MS-DOS)

Manufacturer: Infocom
55 Wheeler Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02138
(800) 262-6868

10

The Science Fiction Adventure: Suspended

uspended is a prose adventure from Infocom created by Michael Berlyn. As with the Zork series, it has an extensive vocabulary and responds to English sentences. Unlike Zork, however, it is not a fantasy adventure, but uses a science fiction scenario. The basic objective is to repair the computers and get the weather, transportation, and food systems in balance again. You will get a score based on the amount of damage that occurs during the time you are repairing the computers and getting the systems balanced.

Overview

As the game begins, you have been kept in a state of suspended animation for hundreds of years, in a computer complex far below the surface of the planet Contra. In this cyrogenic suspension, your mind is used to monitor the computers that control the weather, transportation, and food production for the surface systems. Should any emergency occur, the system is designed to wake you up so that you can attempt to identify the problem and correct it, while still connected to the computers.

GOOD MORNING!

Although you are still in your capsule and immobile, you have six robots that are available to help you identify and repair the problems. Each robot has a unique capability. Auda, for example, can hear quite well but cannot see. Iris can see, but starts the game in need of repair and seems to have limited mobility. Waldo is an industrial robot, with only sonar sensors. Poet used to be a diagnostic robot, but now seems to talk in gibberish, quoting silly poems about the situation, which is deteriorating rapidly. Sensa can detect vibrational activity but, like Waldo, Poet, and Auda, cannot see. Whiz is a great help in giving you advice and information about the complex and its history. A seventh robot, Fred, will also be found, but seems totally beyond repair.

The robots are your only hope in getting the situation in order again, as you are still in your capsule and unable to help directly. As you try to get the robots scurrying around to fix the problems, the status line at the top of the page will tell you that the surface systems are deteriorating rapidly. On the surface of Contra, the weather condition is a blizzard, food production is declining, and the transportation system has a rapidly increasing number of casualties. To top this off, Iris is running around nagging you and begging for repair, saying you will only need one IC to get her fixed. Waldo seems unable to get the panel off of Iris to get to the IC and keeps telling you that things are just not that simple.

After about 160 moves, the humans show up in the complex. In an effort to stabilize things, they will decide to unplug you and bring in a clone. If you haven't made some good progress by this time, it is curtains. Lots of luck!

General Strategies for Exploring

A map is provided with the game, so you will not have to spend time mapping the complex. It is a good thing, too, as the situation is bad and you will not have time for mapping. Read very carefully all the documentation. Spend your first few games getting to know the robots. It will take many games to get Iris fixed, so do not spend much time trying to fix her in the first few games. Find out instead, for example, how to use Whiz to

get information when you need it. Certain robots have limited mobility, and you should discover the difference between the limited mobility of Iris and why Waldo cannot get to the lower level.

Explore each room, taking notes on what you find. You can use notepaper for this or use a felt pen to write on the map. The map has a plastic surface, and is quite useful for temporary notes that can be erased later. Take lots of notes on paper, printing some of your notes using the SCRIPT command occasionally. Once you learn the robot personalities and where various objects are located, you can begin to repair Iris. I had over a dozen pages of notes before I finished, and many pages before starting to repair Iris.

Examine each room carefully with different robots, as it is easy to miss an object. Auda, for example, cannot detect an object in a room if it emits no sound. As you explore each room, also take notice of the different personalities and capabilities of the robots. Try sending some of the robots around in a group and when you find an object have each of them examine it in turn. The game is only perceived as open-ended, but in reality there is only one basic scenario. After you complete the game, you can use various commands to alter the scenario somewhat, but the game is actually very determinate.

There are basically four phases to the solution of the game. During the first phase, you must fix Iris. If Iris is not working by the time the humans arrive, there is not much hope of completing the game. The second phase begins when the humans arrive. They enter the complex, use the library to analyze the problem, and will try to get a clone to replace you if you cannot repair the computers fast enough. You will actually need the help of the humans to correct things. The third phase, and perhaps the most difficult, is the actual repair of the computers. It begins after you are able to successfully stop the humans. The final phase is balancing the computers. After Iris is repaired, you should also do the best you can to minimize surface damage while you are trying to repair the computers. You will not be able to get the three systems in balance until the computers are repaired, but you can minimize the damage while you work on the computers.

Hints and Clues

How do I get Iris repaired?
Egcya edcc uhhy va th ehgrdum g nohidgc hfvhundau guy kap edcc uhhy g rhocgihlhuv di.

How do I stop the acid mist?
Vrk vprudum vxh exhhc du vxh lgduvhugih grhg.

Can I get any of the robots to the lower level where Auda is located?
Kap edcc uhhy va bduy vxh ehymh.

Is Fred of any use?
Kap edcc uhhy vxh rhy edrh du brhy.

How can I stop the humans?
Xgjh gpyg cdnvhu. Db kap igu bduy nalh egk ab chgydum vxhl va vxh lgduvhuguih grhg, kap edcc mgdu g cav ab vdlh. Gcvhrugvhck, db gpyg vgshn vxh igr vxhk edcc th nvrguyhy bar g cdvvch exdch.

How do I improve the weather?
Ehgvxhr ixgumh dn ncae, tpv nhv vxh ldyych ydgc va vxh jgcph ab vxh avxhr.

How do I improve the transit system?
Nxpv yaeu vxh vgfdn bdrnv, vxhu vxh mcdyhegcs. Exhu vxhrh grh ua caumhr gukauh au vxh gdrocguhn, nvao vxhl.

What about the food?
Drdn edcc vhcc kap exhu vxdumn grh tgcguihy.

How do I read the sign?
Drdn dn vxh auck auh exa igu rhgy vxh ndmu, guy kap edcc uav mhv drdn va vxh grhg. Gcna, kap iguuav vgsh vxh ndmu va drdn. Egcya edcc uhhy vxh igr bar vxdn.

How do I repair the computers?
Vxhrh grh vea trashu igtchn. Kap edcc uhhy oahv'n xhco. Kap ya uav uhhy vxh tcph igtch, tpv kap edcc uhhy g ipvvhr.

SPECIFICATIONS: Suspended

Name: Suspended

Type: Prose Adventure — science fiction

System: almost all computers (MS-DOS: PC, Compaq, XT)

Memory Required: 48K-64K for CP/M, 48K for IBM PC

Price: $49.95 (CP/M) or $59.95 (MS-DOS)

Manufacturer: Infocom
55 Wheeler Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02138
(800) 262-6868

11

More Science Fiction: Planetfall and Starcross

Planetfall is an Infocom science fiction prose adventure written by Steve Meretzky. It comes complete with a space-age advertisement for explorers: "The Patrol is Looking for a Few Good Organisms." A robust-looking space-suited figure charges across the cover carrying like a weapon — a mop. Starcross is also an Infocom science fiction prose adventure. It comes in a package that looks like it could be used for a frisbee if you get tired of the game.

Planetfall: Overview

Planetfall, like most Infocom games, will not bore you. The excitement has only begun when your spaceship explodes. The apparent object of the game is more than survival, but another purpose seems to emerge as you get further into your adventure.

You've just joined the stellar patrol as a scrub boy on deck nine. On your first trip out, your spaceship, S.P.S. Feinstein, blows up and you barely survive, using an escape pod. The pod takes you to a nearby planet, Resida, where you again barely survive a landing and swim to a nearby deserted island. On the island you find the strange remains of buildings, equipment,

machines, and some type of civilization. Some of the machines seem to work, but at least four machines appear inoperable. You can find no living person. The exact object of the game appears uncertain, but apparently, if you can get the machines working and survive until something good happens, someone will mysteriously appear and tell you you have won the game.

You are apparently alone on the island and you have only a small survival kit. Your first mission seems to be to find a way to get food to go beyond the limited supply in your kit. To get anywhere, you will need some type of funny little access cards. Although as a cadet you have been issued a card, you do not seem to be able to use your card to get food from the kitchen, to go up or down in any of the elevators, or to make any shuttle trips. You will spend most of the early part of the game exploring the ruins and trying to find more of those funny access cards you will need.

After a little exploring, a weird little robot, Floyd, joins you and relentlessly stays with you, singing ridiculous songs, reminiscing about his past friends (such as Lazarus), writing graffiti on the wall, and being humorous. The guy seems so cute and lovable that you quickly become attached to him. Actually, he is quite an asset and, if he likes a particular object, will carry it for you. Floyd is very important to the plot of the story. Pay attention to what he says.

Spend your early time mapping the ruins and trying to find all the access cards. While you are doing this you will find (unlike other Infocom games) that you can become hungry, sleepy, or sick. The map includes over 75 rooms, so your final world is quite large. Mark the map carefully, using it to indicate the location of objects and any special features, such as a door that needs an access card to open, buttons that can be pushed, or combination locks.

The game is very friendly, and you will find a hint or two given occasionally. You will also find a large number of signs and messages written in the strange language of the lost civilization. After a few hours of the game, you will be able to read the language yourself.

Sleep is dangerous in a subtle way. You cannot explore very long without it (after all, your perilous descent leaves you exhausted), but when you wake up, things you might have been carrying may be lying on the floor. You had better check your inventory. You will get warnings when you get sleepy or hungry, and you had better heed the game warnings.

Planetfall: Strategies for Exploring

In your first few games, you will never even make it to the island. Once you get to the island, save the game and start your exploration. Spend your early time on the island looking for food and the access cards for food, the elevators, and the shuttle. Until these basic needs are met, ignore the broken machines. Get Floyd operative and map the ruins. Learn where objects are and solve the variety of small puzzles that you will need to survive.

Ignore the combination lock for the early part of the game. Get the padlock open and find what is beyond the padlocked door. Sleep and eat when the game tells you these are needed.

Hints and Clues

Planetfall

Can I keep the ship from exploding?
Vpm wk w kyet tpb pf rv mark swdn.

How do I survive the pod trip?
Snm rv man kwunmb jnt.

How do I keep from drowning?
Ekm PEM mp onwhn man qpi wvi jpfz uwkm. Tn kefn mp mwzn man kefhrhwo zrm. Dphn mp man orsam.

How do I open the padlock?
Bpe jroo vnni man znb jaryq rk rv man yfnhryn wvi w mppo ufpd man mppo fppd.

How do I get food?
Bpe jroo vnni man zrmyanv wyynkk ywfi ufpd tnpvi man frum.

●

What do I do with the acid and base?
Vpmarvs.

●

How do I use the upper elevator?
Man eqqf nonhwmpf wyynkk ywfi rk tnbpvi man frum.

●

How do I use the lower elevator?
Uopbi jroo qfpieyn man opjnf nonhwmpf wyynkk ywfi ru bpe ekn wvpmanf wyynkk ywfi rv ark qfnknvyn.

●

How do I use the shuttle?
Man qoek ypvmfpo yweknk wyynonfwmrvs, man drvek inynonfwmrpv. Man irkqowb mnook man hnopyrmb. Bpe kapeoi tn wton mp kmpq jrmapem yfwkarvs.

Starcross: Overview

The year is 2186. Civilization has miraculously survived and has colonies on the Moon, Mars, and a few large asteroids. As a space merchant, you are looking for that black hole that could make you a fortune. It is a lonely job, but if you can find a single black hole your fortune is made. Harnessed and transported to your base on Ceres, it could provide an inexhaustable source of power. You have all the special equipment you need for the job: a mass detector to spot the hole; magnets to trap the hole; and even a containment tank to haul it back. Traveling through the asteroid belt, you are sleeping off your loneliness until the mass detector's alarm jolts you to attention and tells you it has found an uncharted mass. Your fortune could be changing.

As the alarm wakes you, you manage to get up and rush to the control room. The mass detector output describes the mass, and your ship's computer can help you zero in on your target. On approaching the target, however, you are in for a big surprise. Looking more like a huge cylindrical artifact, it hangs ominously in space as you approach it. After many games

you will finally be able to get inside the artifact, but your problems have only just begun. Plants are dying, the air supply is thin and the artifact seems to be slowly shutting down. You will even find a few strange aliens aboard and a spider-like creature that's bored, but friendly enough. Skeletons, a broken visor fragment, numerous colored rods, and a strange laboratory all add to the mystery.

Starcross: Strategies for Exploring

Once you are aboard the artifact, the normal directions of north, south, west, and east have no meaning. You can go up and down, starboard or port, and forward or aft. Using north, south, east, or west will only get you lost. This means you will need to map the artifact as a three-dimensional object. This will soon become a real challenge. Even if you purchase the *InvisiClues* book with its map, you will discover that figuring out how to use a two-dimensional map in three-dimensional space can be a real challenge.

To get into the artifact you will need to actually think like a space explorer. You are not just solving puzzles, and to survive you must think like a stellar patroller in 2186. You will need to know some things about the solar system, physics, and other facts of science to successfully figure out what is happening. At times, you may get a clue as to your purpose on the artifact. For example, if you are a little slow with what you are supposed to be doing, you may become terminated. In the process, however, you will get a clue.

Most of the plot seems to involve the discovery of a number of control rods and figuring out what to do with the rods once they are found. One rod, in particular, challenges your imagination to capture it and involves the most ingenious machine on the artifact. The purpose of the ray gun is mysterious, as you seem to be able to fire it at almost anything. It does have a purpose and it is important to the successful solution of the endgame.

Hints and Clues

Starcross

What is the safety line used for?
Uy kya ndljd syfo ichv fkndii ha hi laalxcdu ay acd ichv.

●

How do I get aboard the artifact alive?
Rddi syfo idlatdna zliadkdu fkahn acd loahzlxa cli ivfk fkudo syf.

●

How do I get into the artifact?
Acd ixfnvafod hi acd iynlo isiadw. Vfic dloac. Acd ahks xynfwk hi acd loahzlxa. Vfic lku alrd acd tnxr xosialn oyu.

●

How do I get beyond the burrow?
Qhjd acd xchdz iywdachkq cd blkai, xywwfkhxlad bhac chw acla syf blka acd toybk oyu, lku zynnyf acd xchdz.

●

What do I do with the spider?
Qhjd chw iywdachkq acla whqca hkadodia chw zoyw syfd ichv.

●

How do I get the lights in the yellow hallway on?
Syf kddu acd sdnnyb oyu lku acd lvvoyvohlad inya.

●

How do I get the blue rod?
Syf iywdachkq yk acd ivcdod lku xclkqd acd uhln idaahkq.

●

How are the red and blue disks used?
Vfa tyac yk acd znyyo lku iadv yk ykd.

●

What do I use the broken visor for?
Aos nyyrhkq acoyfqc ha.

SPECIFICATIONS: Planetfall

Name: Planetfall

Type: Prose Adventure — science fiction

System: almost all computers (MS-DOS: PC, Compaq, XT)

Memory Required: 48K-64K for CP/M, 48K for IBM PC

Price: $49.95 (CP/M) or $59.95 (MS-DOS)

Manufacturer: Infocom
55 Wheeler Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02138
(800) 262-6868

SPECIFICATIONS: Starcross

Name: Starcross

Type: Prose Adventure — science fiction

System: almost all computers (MS-DOS: PC, Compaq, XT)

Memory Required: 48K-64K for CP/M, 48K for IBM PC

Price: $49.95 (CP/M) or $59.95 (MS-DOS)

Manufacturer: Infocom
55 Wheeler Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02138
(800) 262-6868

12

CP/M D&D: Nemesis

Nemesis is a role-playing fantasy game marketed by Supersoft. It offers a high level of character interaction on microcomputer systems that use CP/M. Nemesis is a game in which fantasy characters can be created and used to explore a fantasy world (or dungeon) with mythical beasts and mystical powers that question your right to exist. Your character can explore the dungeon, retrieving treasures and gaining power, while fighting the mystical opponents with whatever resources you can discover. Using the optional Dungeon Master module, new dungeons can be created with opponents, treasures, and magical powers defined by the player.

Overview

Nemesis, as a role-playing type game, permits you to create characters with names, personalities, and occupations. These unique characters can then explore a multi-level dungeon. Each dungeon level is more difficult, more dangerous, and contains better treasures than the preceding level. The first level, or castle level, is the only safe level in the game. While at this level, the character can recover from wounds, sell or buy armor or other items, or try to purchase secrets of items recovered from the dungeon.

The dungeon is entered from the castle, and the character is always exposed to danger while in the dungeon.

The game runs *asynchronously*, which means that (unlike a prose adventure) you cannot sit around the dungeon reading your maps while you plan a strategy for what to do next. As long as a character is in the dungeon, the character is vulnerable to attacks from a wide variety of monsters roaming the dungeon. When you are fighting a monster, if you wait too long to attack you will be in trouble.

A character has various statistics that describe the character's current state. When first created, a character is not very strong, with only a few hit points, a little gold, and an armor class of 10. Hit points refer to the health of the character, and are gradually lost in battles. If your number of hit points reaches zero, your character is dead. It is the player's responsibility to get the character to the castle when hit points are low, to permit recovery before re-entering the dungeon. Alternately, at deeper dungeon levels, certain items may be found that permit recovery without the need to retreat to the castle. The armor class refers to the character's degree of protection. A class of 10 means bare skin. As you discover shields, leathers, and mace, this armor class will drop, permitting you more success in battle. A character also has a certain level of strength, intelligence, wisdom, charisma, dexterity, and constitution. All of these change during the game as the character gains experience.

Installation

The game requires a terminal with cursor addressing, and must be installed on your system for your specific terminal. The terminal characteristics are stored in a file, and for most common terminals you can simply locate the file on the disk with the game that corresponds to your terminal and rename it to the TERM.DEF file. If your terminal is not on the list, you will need to run the TERMDEF program included with the game. This file permits you to create a data file for your specific terminal. The same program will also permit you to change the clock rate of the game. The clock rate determines how fast and how often the monsters attack. Changing the clock rate permits you to control the difficulty of the game.

Creating the Character

Once the system is installed, you will want to create a character to use in exploring the dungeon. This is done using the PERSON program included with the game. Once a character is created, it can be used in many games, unless the character has been killed in battle. The statistics for the character, as well as information on what areas of the dungeon have been discovered, are saved between games as long as the character remains alive.

When the PERSON program is started, the program will request the character's name. You may give it any unique name that does not belong to an active character, using up to eight letters. You will then be requested to enter the character's type (see Table 12.1). Any one of the 15 character types can be selected. As this has some effect on the character's statistics, this should be chosen carefully. An ogre, for example, will probably have great strength, but very little wisdom.

Table 12.1 Occupation Types Available

CLERIC	MINSTREL	RAVER
DEMONDIM	NINJA	ROGUE
FEATHEROR	PALADIN	SAGE
HIREBRAND	PEASANT	SAMURAI
MAGE	RANGER	VALKYRIE

After the type is chosen, the player is in the part of the program known as the roller. The roller creates the statistics of the player, using the computer to simulate four 5-sided dice, each with a range of one to four. The results are then adjusted for the character type. The computer will display these statistics, which include the character's intelligence, strength, wisdom, charisma, constitution, and dexterity. Obviously, the higher these statistics are, the better are the chances of your character surviving in the dungeon. These statistics affect various aspects of the character's explorations in the dungeon. For example, a character with low strength will have difficulty opening closed doors in lower levels. A character who has poor dexterity could meet his or her demise against a monster that has fast reflexes (high dexterity). If the character is a magic user, with low dexterity, it will have weak spells that do not last very long.

After the character's statistics are displayed (Figure 12.1), you may choose to accept these (by entering a Y) or reject them for another try at

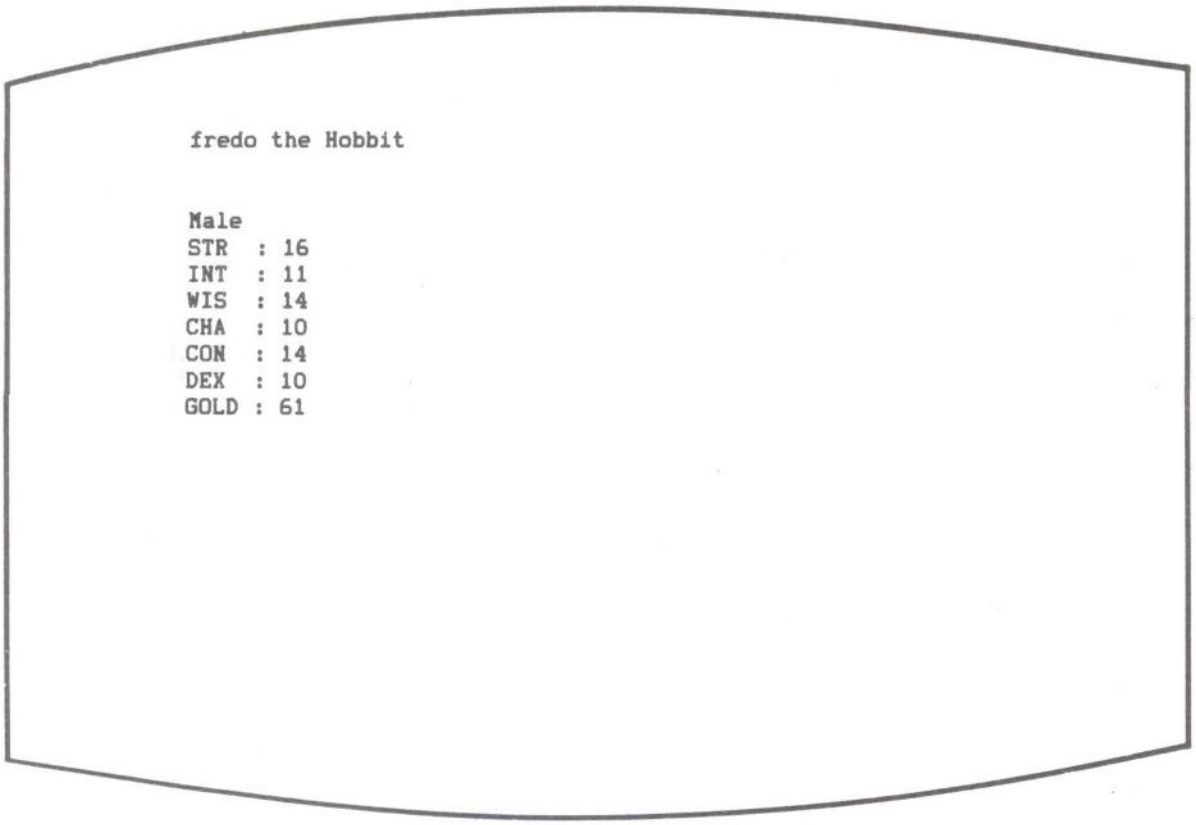

Figure 12.1 Creating a Nemesis character

the roller. As you continue to roll, you will continue to see various statistics. In this way you can build strong or weak characters. Normally, you will want to try for a strong character. Sometimes you may wish to create a weak character and try to keep the character alive until sufficient experience is gained to improve the statistics for venturing into the lower levels.

After the statistics are accepted, the character's alignment is requested. This can be lawful, neutral, or chaotic. This will, to some extent, limit the choice of occupation.

The last selection is the occupation of the character. Although 15 occupations are available, most of these will not be available to your character. The computer uses the previous statistics you chose to determine what occupations are permitted, and displays only a few choices based on the statistics. Almost anyone can be a peasant, for example, but the Mage requires an intelligence of at least 12 and the Cleric requires a wisdom of at least 12.

The character is then saved and can be used in any game as long as it remains alive.

The Castle

The game is initiated with the command:

A>*NEMESIS XXXXX* [RETURN]

Where *XXXXX* is the name of the character. The game will then begin with the character in the castle and the castle menu displayed (see Figure 12.2). You will not have much gold, so you will probably not be able to purchase anything at first, except a hanky (which you do not really need). You might as well choose the *E* option and enter the dungeon.

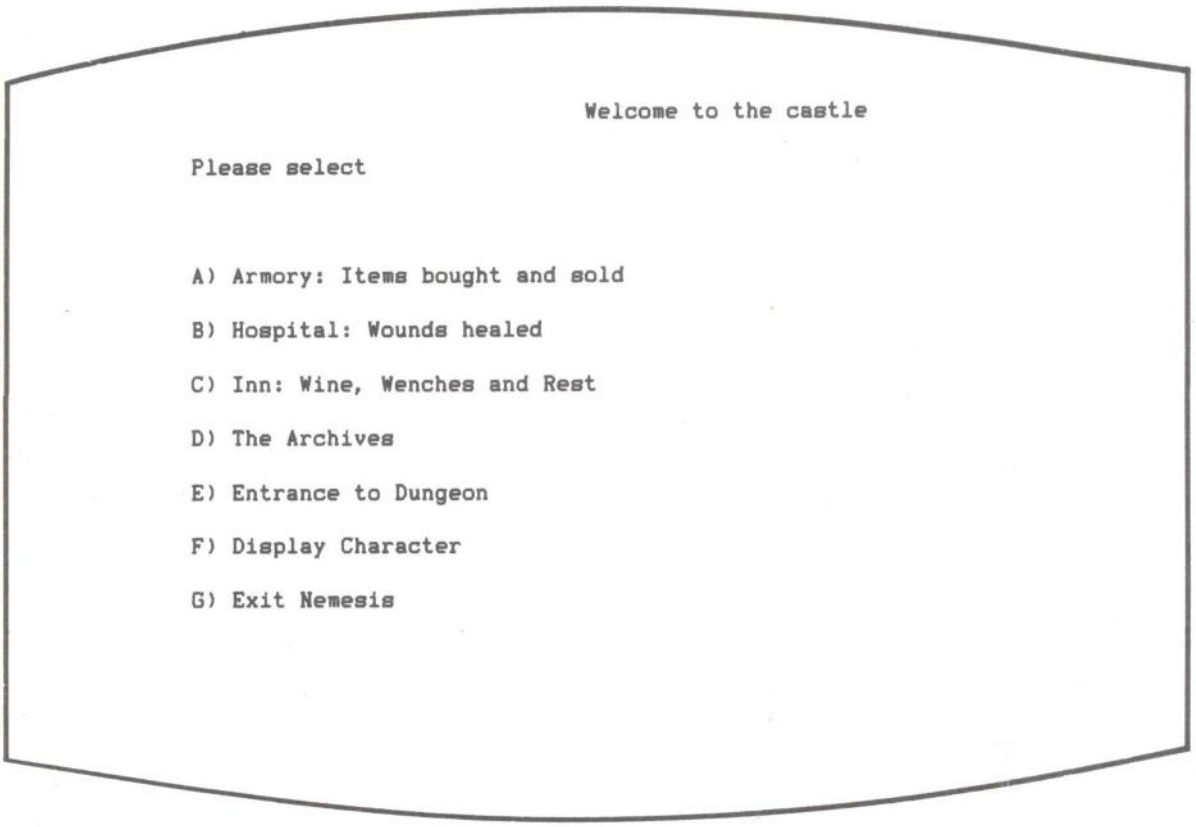

Figure 12.2 Nemesis main menu

The castle, as we have mentioned, is the only safe place in the game. You will frequently retreat to the castle as you find your hit level dropping. It is wise to start back before the hit level gets too low, leaving you at least some margin of safety for the inevitable monsters you will meet as you return and the loss of hit points in these encounters. In the castle, you can

visit the inn and let time heal your wounds or you can visit the hospital for a faster recovery. The armory is the place to purchase or sell the variety of objects you find in the dungeon. The archives is used to discover (for a price) if an object you have found has magical properties.

The armory has a list of objects and posted prices. You can purchase any item if you have enough gold. The value an object holds for you depends upon your occupation. A mace or sword, for example, is of no use to a cleric, unless it has magical properties. If you wish to sell an object, you can get a bid on the object at the armory. You can then choose to accept the bid or ask for another bid.

The archives are useful for finding the magical properties of objects. You offer to pay some of your gold, and you may find out if the object has magical properties and what they are. There is always a gamble, however. If you do not pay enough, the magical property (if it exists) will not be disclosed. This will leave you wondering if you, indeed, have a dead object or you just did not pay enough.

Exploring the Dungeon

Once you enter the dungeon, you are exposed to all of its dangers and you can discover its treasures. There are 10 levels to the dungeon. The castle is considered the zero level, so you enter the dungeon at level one. You will see only a single small square displayed in the center of the screen. Using the arrow keys of the terminal, you can move the character about while you watch the diagram of the level unfold on the screen. The full level, once mapped, will be a 22×26 matrix. As you gradually progress to the deeper levels, you will find stairways, chutes, pits, secret doors, fires, teleporters, and other dangers.

Within the dungeon, you will always find the display in one of two modes. In the normal mode you will see the matrix of the current level, with the map showing what your character has discovered up to this time. The second mode is the character statistics display, and shows the information on the current status of your character (see Figure 12.3). If you meet a monster in exploring, the screen will automatically shift to the character statistics display. You can then enter *F* (for fight) or M (for magic) to deal with your opponent. One word of warning: you will not have much magical ability at the start, and your only alternative will be to fight. In addition,

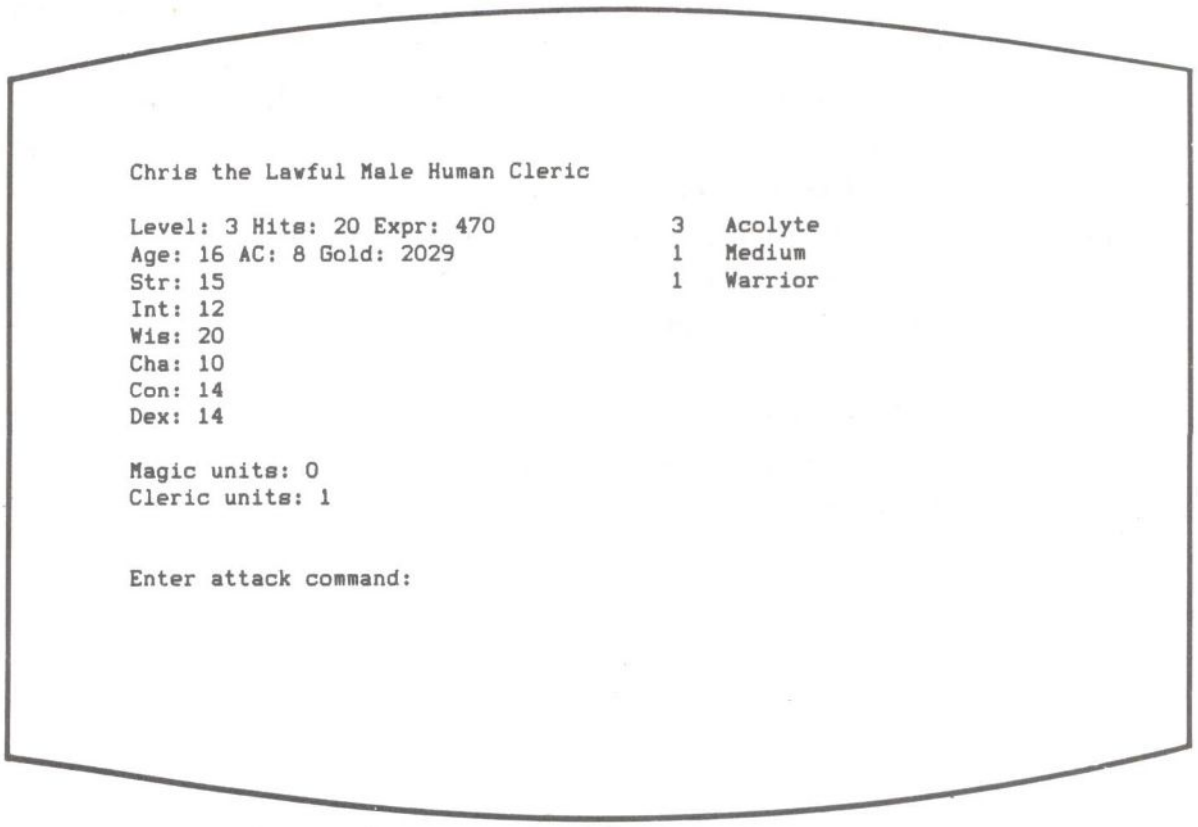

Figure 12.3 Mapping a dungeon level

you may find yourself fighting more than one opponent at a time. The screen will display the type of opponent and the number you are fighting. If you take too long to dispatch your opponent, you will find that other monsters will come to the opponent's aid.

As you fight your battle (by continuously hitting the *F* key), you can watch your character statistics change. The statistic you particularly want to watch is your hit level. If the opponent is fast enough and strong enough, you will see the hit level beginning to drop. As we have already mentioned, as your hit level gets too low, you will need to return to the castle.

Objects will appear as you explore a level. Some items, such as a leather, shield, or helmet, can help you in battles and lower your armor class. Some items cannot be used by characters of particular occupations and may as well be dropped or carried to the armory and sold. Some items have magic properties. The object will be identified as you find it (as BOOTS or SWORD), but the display will not tell you if the object has any special properties. Once you find an object, you can go to the character statistics display and try to use the object (with a *U* command). Watch the statistics and see if any value changes. Sometimes the order in which items are used

determines whether the statistics change. You can unuse an object with the Q command. After you have used an object twice, you can take it to the archives and, by paying enough gold, determine if it has magical properties and get the full description. A torch, for example, may be a magic torch that can reveal secret doors. Conversely, the boots you found may be squeaky boots, and actually dangerous to wear about the dungeon.

Various spells are available to clerics and magicians. These include light (to see secret doors), heal (which reduces trips to the castle), and levitate (which can get you over pits). The full list of these spells is in Table 12.2 and Table 12.3. These can only be used at lower levels as you gain the spell units necessary to use the spells. Certain treasures can help you with some of the same powers.

Table 12.2 Magic Spells Available

LIGHT	(Travel)	DISCLOSE	(Travel)
DAMAGE	(Attack)	SPEED	(Travel)
SLEEP	(Attack)	LEVITATE	(Travel)
SHIELD	(Travel)	FEAR	(Attack)
STRENGTH	(Travel)	CLOUDKILL	(Attack)
FIREBALL	(Attack)	POWER WORD	(Attack)
LIGHTNING	(Attack)		

Note: Travel type spells cannot be thrown in battle, and attack spells can only be used in battle. Effect and duration of spells are determined by the character's dexterity and intelligence.

Table 12.3 Cleric Spells Available

LIGHT	(Travel)	ATTACK	(Attack)
CURE	(Travel)	DISPELL	(Attack)
DAMAGE	(Attack)	DISCLOSE	(Travel)
PROTECT	(Travel)	HOLY WORD	(Attack)
HEAL	(Travel)	SILENCE	(Travel)
RESTORE	(Travel)		

Note: Travel type spells cannot be thrown in battle, and attack spells can only be used in battle. Effect and duration of spells are determined by the character's dexterity and wisdom.

Strategies for Exploration

You will not find much of value on the first level. Spend your time only to find the magic torch and to get the experience you need for the lower levels. The magic torch will be needed to find the secret door to get below level 2. Be careful and do not move too fast to the lower levels. Each time you enter the castle, the game will tell you what level you are capable of entering with some degree of expecting to leave alive. Explore cautiously, never venturing beyond this level until you gain more experience. Fights and encounters increase your experience level. Some areas of a level may be particularly monster-prone. By using these areas, you can increase your experience level quickly. You should be careful, however, that you do not let the hit level drop too low.

Always keep a watch on your hit level. Since the trip to the surface is time-consuming, it is tempting, as you reach lower levels, to see how low you can push your hit level and still make it back to the surface. Instead, stay on the cautious side and start for the surface before the hit level gets too low.

Try combinations of leather, mace, shields, and helmets to keep your armor class as low as possible. As you venture deeper, you may find some protection that works better. Some items will have no use for someone of your occupation.

As soon as you create a character, copy this to a dummy character to use as a backup in case your character meets his or her demise. Occasionally, suspend the game at a given point and copy your current character again to this backup. In this way, if your character does meet his or her Waterloo, you can retrieve your backup and continue without having to restart from the first level.

Dungeon Master

Eventually, you may want to create your own dungeon. Using the optional Dungeon Master module, you can create your own fantasy world. Like Nemesis, Dungeon Master contains a terminal definition program that is used to define the characteristics for your specific terminal. In Nemesis, characters are defined as having achieved a certain level based on their

current experience points. The dungeon, also, is defined in levels. On each level a variety of monsters roam with their own levels. A level 1 monster, for example, could be fighting an adventurer of level 3 on level 2. Items, as well, are assigned to levels.

Dungeon Master creates the dungeon levels using two input data files. One of these contains the monsters, with specific information (including level) about each. The other is the item file, with information on each item. The two data files are ASCII data files and can be modified with a word processor to make any particular fantasy world. The manual describes the structure of this file. For example, in the item file is stored the chance of finding the item, the number of items on the item's level, the full disclosed name of the item, a code for the undisclosed name, the effect of the item on the armor class, the power of the item in fighting, the life of the item, codes for spells using the item, and the noise of the item when used (squeaky boots are noisy).

Using these data files, Dungeon Master is used to create each level, with the player actually *drawing* the level on the screen (see Figure 12.3). Secret doors, stairs, shafts, teleporters, fires, and pits are all indicated by the user. Once the level is drawn, the dungeon level is saved and the next level created. Dungeon Master also contains a new PERSON program, as new characters, when defined, must be defined for a particular dungeon. The dungeon and character will each have a name.

SPECIFICATIONS: Nemesis

Name: Nemesis

Type: D&D Adventure — medieval fantasy

System: CP/M-80

Memory Required: 46K

Price: $40 (optional Dungeon Master for $35.00)

Manufacturer: Supersoft
P.O. Box 1628
Champaign, IL 61820
(217) 359-2112

13

MS-DOS D&D: Wizardry

Wizardry is considered the classic of the role-playing games for the Apple and IBM PC computers. For five years, it has consistently won the annual Softalk Award as the most popular software. Softalk is the publisher of *Softalk*, *St. Mac*, and other books and magazines and the award is voted by the readers. As a fantasy role-playing game with graphics and sound, it is a masterpiece of complexity and will take you months to solve. The game was written by Andrew Greenberg and Robert Woodhead, and is published by Sir-tech Software.

Wizardry is a medieval tale of adventure, soldiers of fortune, crusaders, and treasure. You will create characters, form parties, and descend to the Proving Grounds of the Mad Overlord to recover the valuable amulet stolen by the wizard Werdna from the mad overlord Trebor. Along the way you must deal with monsters, avoid pits and dark areas, solve the mysteries of one-way doors and hidden doors, as well as recover treasures from treasure chests that explode and are protected by poison needles or spells.

Overview

Unlike Nemesis, in Wizardry you create a group of characters to explore the dungeon. In fact, as a single character you will not survive very long

against your opponents in the dungeon. The characters have personalities and occupations and explore a dungeon with 10 levels of increasing difficulty. Your characters, to survive, must be ready with armor, weapons, and spells. They must also be ordered correctly, with your fighters in front and your magic users in the rear. A beginner will find it difficult, as you will be creating groups of characters over and over again, only to see them meet their deaths in battles at the very first level. As you gain more experience, the game takes on a better challenge and complexity.

On the IBM PC or IBM XT, the game can be played with a monochrome display or with a color/graphics adapter and color monitor. It also works well with a Hercules Graphics card.

Playing the Game

Before playing, you must create the scenario disk. This disk is used to save information between games and to keep track of your players. The game has a utility function that is used to create the scenario disk, and this *must* be done before you play the game.

When you first enter the game you are at the castle. Your beginning strategy should be to create your characters, select your party from the characters in the tavern, purchase the necessary equipment, and order your party (decide who is in front and who is at the rear). Only then can you descend to the Proving Grounds of the Mad Overlord.

To create your character, first go to the Edge of the Town. From there, you can follow the steps to create the characters you wish to use. Although characters can be assigned passwords, for now you should not use the password option, and at the password option enter only a carriage return. If you do assign a password to a character and forget the password, the character will be unusable and will clutter up the disk. Unless you need the password option, enter only the carriage return. For each character you create, the game will arbitrarily assign a random number of points (see Figure 13.1). Each character can be assigned one of five races and one of three alignments (good, neutral, evil). The points can be distributed among the various characteristics of the character as you wish. In this way, if you have sufficient points you can create a mage, fighter, or whatever. The program will tell you what occupations are available with the current assigned point distribution. You will need to create several characters to start.

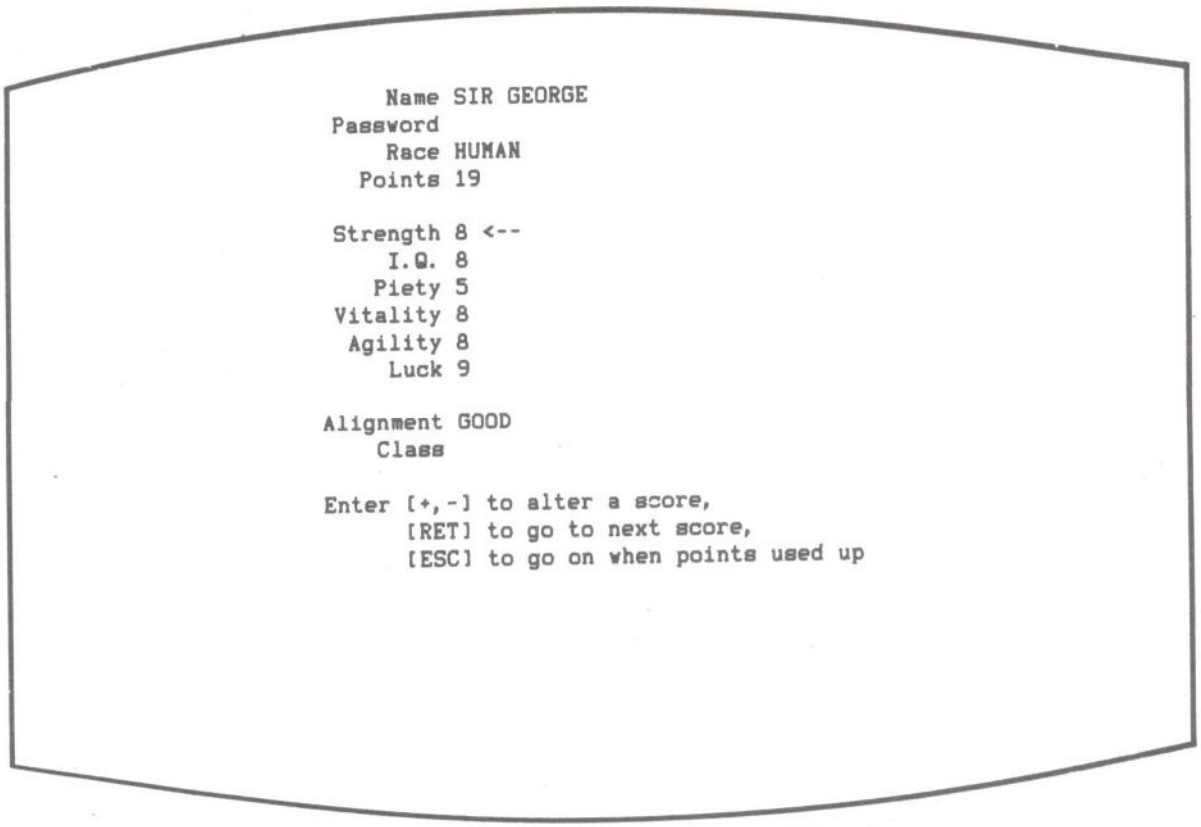

Figure 13.1 Creating a character in Wizardry

After the characters are created, go to the Gilgamesh's Tavern to select the characters for the adventure from the list of characters you have created (see Figure 13.2). Notice that each character has a certain number of hit points that defines the relative health of the character. The higher the number, the better the character's health and strength.

After the characters are selected, you will want to go to Boltac's Trading Post and purchase equipment for the members of your party (see Figure 13.3). The list is longer than the displayed list, and can be scrolled forward or backward to see the full list of items for sale. Some items will not be available for particular occupations, as a cleric would have no use for a sword.

Once the characters are equipped, return to the Edge of the Town and enter the Maze (this option was not on the menu when you started). Do not press T by mistake (for tavern), or you will have to reassemble your party. You will then be at the camp, and can order your party. Order the party with the fighters in the front and the priests and mages in the rear. Then, onward to the dungeon!

After you enter the dungeon, the current location in the dungeon is shown as a three-dimensional view (with perspective), as seen through the

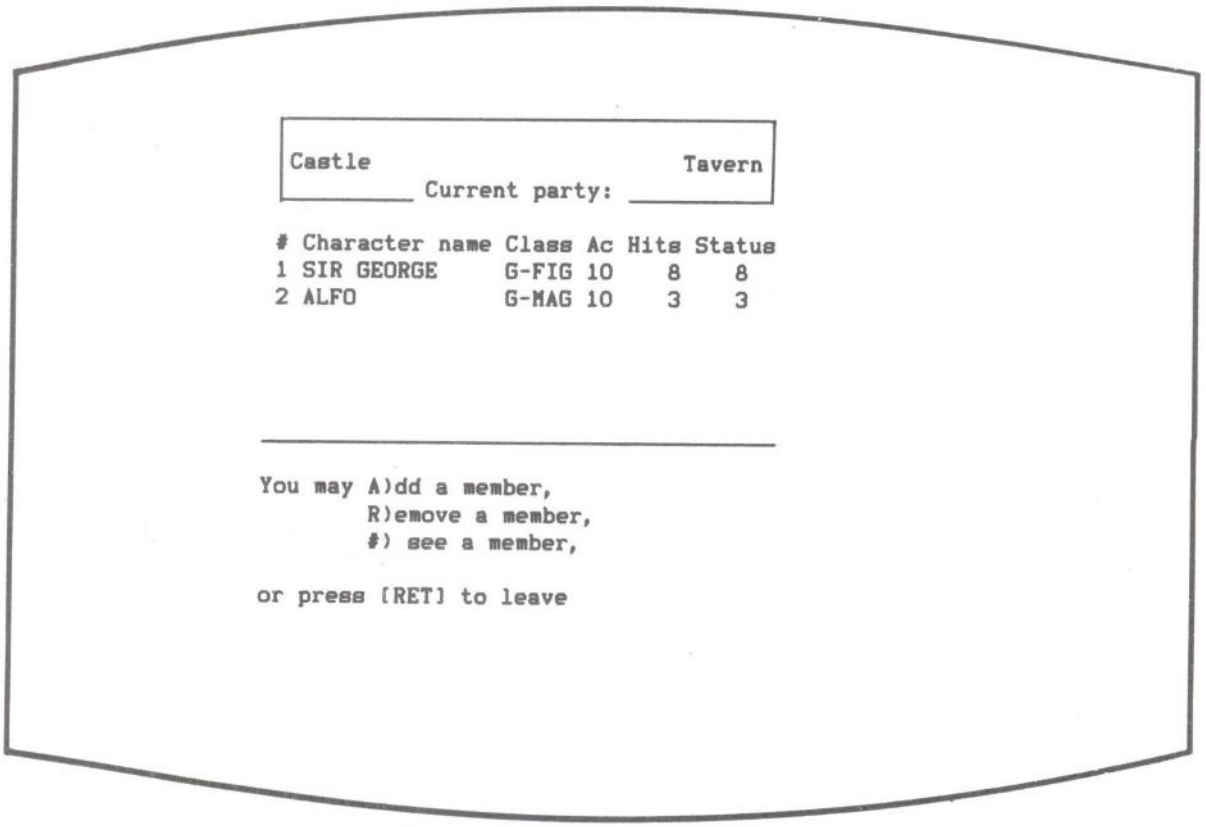
Castle
Tavern
Current party:
Character name Class Ac Hits Status
1 SIR GEORGE G-FIG 10 8 8
2 ALFO G-MAG 10 3 3
You may A)dd a member,
R)emove a member,
#) see a member,
or press [RET] to leave

Figure 13.2 Building the party

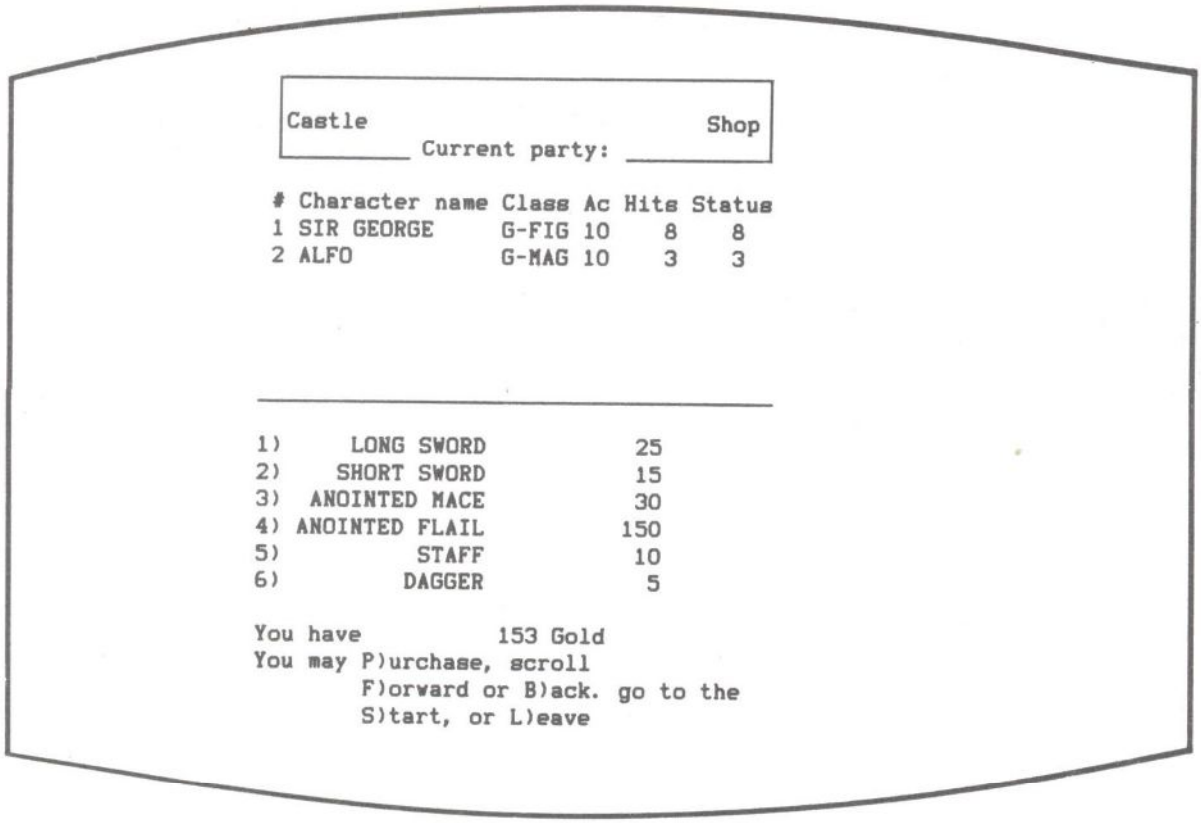

Figure 13.3 Equipping the party

characters' eyes (see Figure 13.4). The available commands are displayed with a summary of the characteristics of the character. As you turn or move, the view changes. At the beginning, your priests and mages will have little power and you must depend upon your fighters to survive the dangers of the dungeon. As you gain experience, you will depend increasingly upon your magic users and your party will become stronger. You can also inspect a character at any time (option I). This will give you current information about the character, and the option R will allow you to read the spell book if the character has magic powers.

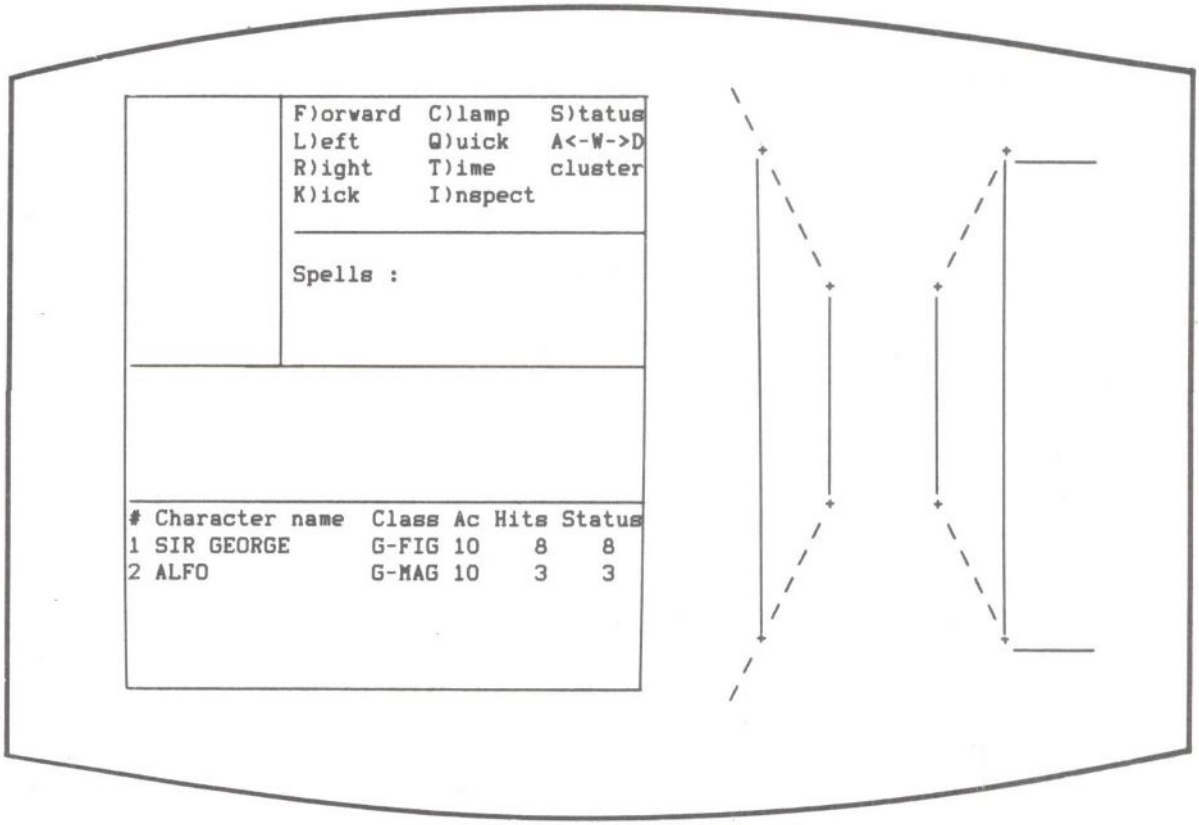
F)orward C)lamp S)tatus
L)eft Q)uick A<-W->D
R)ight T)ime cluster
K)ick I)nspect
Spells :
Character name Class Ac Hits Status
1 SIR GEORGE G-FIG 10 8 8
2 ALFO G-MAG 10 3 3

Figure 13.4 Entering the dungeon

Strategies for Exploration

A good starting party would be two fighters, a priest, a thief and two mages. The fighters will keep the opponents at bay while the priests and mages learn their magic. The thief is good for opening doors and chests for treasures, without getting killed by poison needles or an explosion. The priests and mages will not have much magic power at the start, but as they gain these powers, keep a list of spells close so you will not have to refer to the manual. The game is not as real-time as other games, so you can

relax as you play and draw maps and plot strategy. The spell charts are shown in Table 13.1 and 13.2.

Table 13.1 Priest Spells (In level/alphabetical order)

To Attack	To Disable	To Protect
BADIOS (1)	MANIFO (2)	KALKI (1)
BADIAL (4)	MONTINO (2)	PROFIC (1)
BADIALMA (5)		MATU (2)
LITOKAN (5)		BAMATU (3)
BADI (5)		MAPORFIC (4)
LORTO (6)		
MABADI (6)		
MALIKTO (7)		

To Heal	Tools
DIOS (1)	MILWA (1) (light)
DIALKO (3)	CALFO (2) (x-ray vision)
DIAL (4)	LOMILWA (3) (more light)
LATUMOFIS (4)	LATUMAPIC (3) (identify monsters)
DIALMA (5)	KANDI (5) (location of the dead)
DI (5) (read manual before using)	LOKTOFEIT (6) (teleportation)
KADORTO (7)	(read manual before using)
(read manual before using)	

Table 13.2 Magic Spells (In level/alphabetic order)

To Attack	To Disable	To Protect
HALITO (1)	KATINO (1)	MOGREF (1)
MAHALITO (3)	DILTO (2)	SOPIC (2)
MOLITO (3)	MORLIS (4)	MASOPIC (6)
DALTO (4)	MAMORLIS (5)	
LAHALITO (4)		
MAKANITO (5)		
MADALTO (5)		
HAMAN (6) (read manual before using)		
LAKANITO (6)		
ZILWAN (6)		
MAHAMAN (7) (read manual before using)		
TILTOWAIT (7)		

Tools
DUMAPIC (1) Mapping
MALOR (7) Teleportation

Be patient and take your time. Do not try to go too deep too fast. Gain experience first, then move deeper. At least at the start, return to the castle after every battle to recover. For starters, after descending into the dungeon, go six steps forward, turn right, go one step forward, and kick down the door. Another good starter is to (after descending) go eight steps forward, turn right, go three steps forward, turn right, go forward four steps, and kick the door.

You will need to keep good maps. If you have to run, the map is a valuable asset for basic survival. Explore a level completely before moving to the next level. Each level is a 20×20 grid, with the routes wrapping around. The DUMPAPIC spell can be used to print the current map. Stairways connect all levels except level 10, the last level. This level is reached by a one-way chute, and you must teleport to leave level 10. The stairs can be tricky, leaving you where you do not expect to be left. If you get lost and do not know where you are, start a new map on fresh paper and try to figure out where you are. Even if you do not survive, the map will be handy for the next group.

Know your spells. Keep lists of what spells work best with what monsters. Sometimes a combination of fighting and certain spells works best. Everybody you meet is not a bad guy. Don't just blast someone you meet before finding out who it is. Each opponent is different, and the best strategy for dealing with one type of monster may be different from that of dealing with another type. Keep track of what you learn. Some monsters are not very dangerous, others can take up to two levels of experience points from your character. What the opponent appears to be and what it actually is may be two different things.

A character's death can be reversed if at least one member of your party can get back to the Temple of Cant from the dungeon, but your experience points will be lost. Another alternative is to create two bands of players, and use the second band to go in and rescue a lost party and take it back to the temple for healing. Avoid, if possible, the KADORTO spell to resurrect a character, as it has the possibility of turning your valuable priest to ashes.

One good alternative is to use parties made up of both experienced and inexperienced explorers. The experienced explorers can train the new adventurers. If the experienced leaders are lost in battle, you have new recruits that have some experience and can begin training another group of explorers. You can also use the backup option to save characters at a given point in the game so you can at least recover from that point.

Remember that you should only carry what you need. Extra treasures only tempt wandering monsters. Stash your treasures at the tavern with another friendly adventurer who is not in your party. Bishops are good for this, as they can help you identify magic items.

A good strategy for starting is to gain experience on the first level, mapping the entire level and being sure to get the bronze key (you will need it at the next level). Return to the castle after each battle if you suffer any damage. Get each of your characters to level 2 so they have a few spells and some experience available. On the first two levels, you will need the three keys (gold, bronze, and silver) and the two statues.

The elevators will save you time over the stairs. There is one public elevator from the dark area of Level 1 to Level 4, with a bend at Level 2. There is also a private elevator from Level 4 to Level 9.

Level 4 is very important for a variety of reasons. On Level 4 you can gain access to Trebor's study, where you will discover the instructions for your quest and will be given the blue ribbon you need to use the private elevator. To survive Level 4, be sure you can use the MADALTO spell. Take the public elevator to this level, go straight through two doors, and down the hall to the next door. Pass this door and you will get the ominous message:

> *Suddenly, a loud penetrating clanging of bells can be heard. There is a sudden silence as the bells stop, followed by the clanking and tromping of guardian monsters.*

Obviously, you have got big trouble! Monsters are all about you and there are plenty of battles. If you have the equipment, spells, and experience you need, you will win the battle.

The final foray, of course, is on Level 10, in the lairs of Werdna. Save this level for when you have gained the experience and power from battles on the other levels. There is no way out unless you teleport out using MALOR. Ignore the instructions on arriving at this level.

SPECIFICATIONS: Wizardry

Name: Wizardry

Type: D&D Adventure — medieval fantasy

System: IBM PC, XT

Memory Required: 64K

Price: $49.95

Manufacturer: Sir-Tech Software, Inc.
6 Main Street
Ogdensburg, NY 13669
(315) 393-6633

14

Oubliette

ubliette is a fantasy adventure game based on the role-playing games created by Tactical Studies Rules (TSR). Oubliette was originally conceived and created by Jim Schwaiger in 1977, and was released to the University of Illinois PLATO system later in 1977. The authors of the game include Jim Schwaiger, Dr. John Gaby, Dr. Blanchard DeLong, Ken Bourque, Bruce Szablak, and Victor Helsing. Varget, the ancient language used in the game, was developed by David Emigh.

Oubliette, the word for the title of the game, is derived from a French word that means a dungeon with but one escape. The game itself is derived from an ancient legend of the history of the world.

According to the legend, the beginning world, Tokal, was a savage place, with beasts and monsters that roamed at will. Eventually, humanoid creatures emerged that had one advantage over the beasts and monsters — intelligence. Toward the end of the Tokgorin Era, the humanoids began to roam less and to build small communities with a semblance of civilization. Thus began the Fiegorin Era. The humanoids soon learned that by banding together they gained a certain amount of synergy that gave them an advantage over the other creatures that still roamed the earth. Gradually, races emerged. The humanoids, however, still fought among themselves for the control of territories.

To protect themselves, some groups hid in the forests and mountains, studying nature, religion, and magic. Eventually, they discovered certain energy beyond themselves that they gained through their study. These groups soon discovered a hidden power in a lost language, Varget, that

seemed to be the source of magic and power. Eventually, these secluded clans emerged victorious in their struggle against the more visible humanoid clans, primarily through their religion and magic.

The great wizard LIGNE came from the mountains. With a handful of trusted disciples, a small town was built near the edge of the mountains. The town was the site of a castle soon known as the LIGNE castle. As the area became civilized, the creatures and monsters near the town were captured and put in a holding area beneath the castle. Criminals and other humanoids unfit for the civilization were also put in the holding area. The area beneath the castle soon became a challenge to those who were born into this civilization and had never known of life before the time of LIGNE. In fact, it became almost a rite of passage for young people to try their luck in the dungeon. Gold and strange powers existed in the dungeon, but many of the brave adventurers who tried the quest never returned.

Overview

Like most fantasy role-playing games, the explorer can create one or more characters with which to explore a multilevel dungeon. Players must be created, trained, and equipped before they can dare to enter the dungeon beneath the castle. You can take up to six players at a time into the dungeon.

When the game is started, you will see a menu of choices (Figure 14.1). Your first choice should be the creation of one or more players. Selecting *N* from the main menu will enable you to create these players. Once in the player creation module, you will need to select the race for your new player.

Oubliette provides for eight player races: Dwarf, Elf, Gnoll, Hobbit, Human, Kobold, Ogre, and Orc. The race you select is important, as it effects the characteristics of the player. An Orc, for example, will have a good deal of strength, but very little intelligence. After you select the race you wish, a random number generator determines each of six characteristics for the player: strength, intelligence, wisdom, charisma, constitution, and dexterity. Once the statistics are calculated, the characteristics are displayed and you can choose to accept or reject the characteristics (see Figure 14.2). If you reject the values, the random number generator will try again.

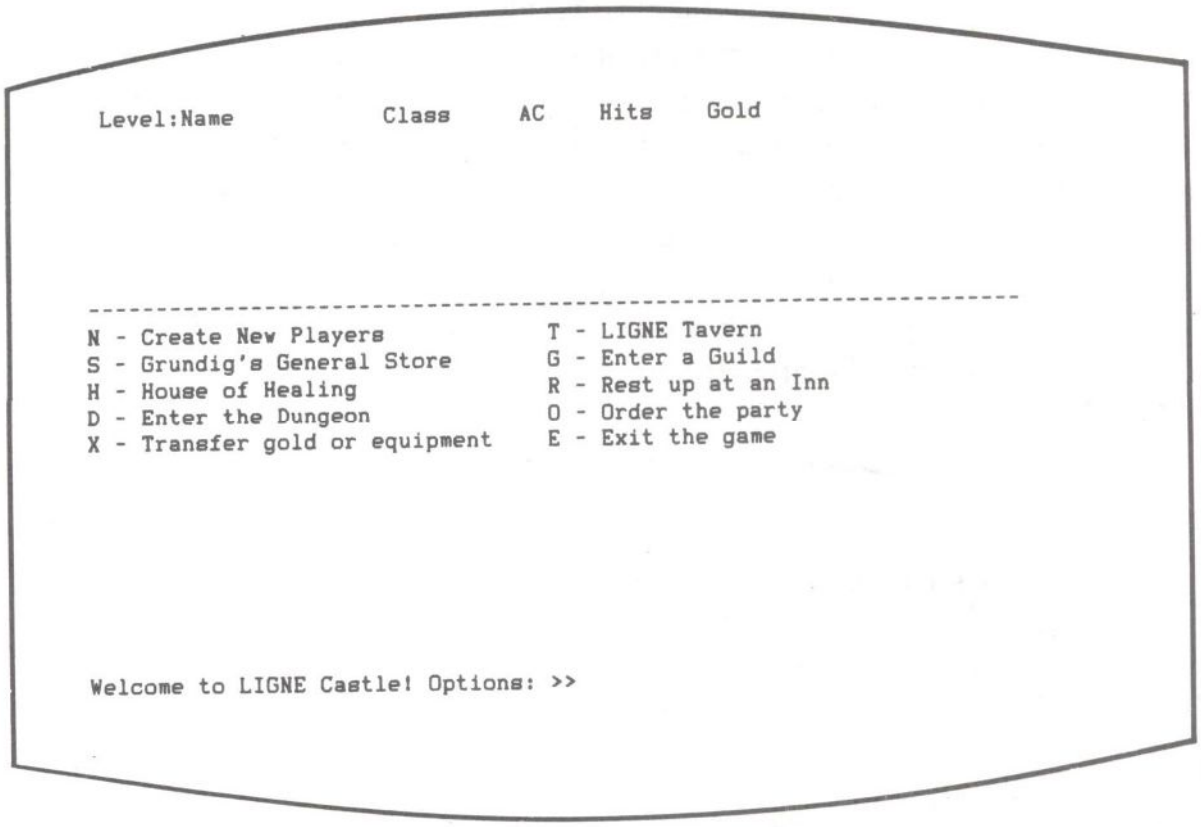
Level:Name Class AC Hits Gold
N - Create New Players
S - Grundig's General Store
H - House of Healing
D - Enter the Dungeon
X - Transfer gold or equipment
T - LIGNE Tavern
G - Enter a Guild
R - Rest up at an Inn
O - Order the party
E - Exit the game
Welcome to LIGNE Castle! Options: >>

Figure 14.1 Oubliette main menu

The characteristics are important in this way:

Strength — determines how hard the player can strike an opponent.

Intelligence — affects the magical ability of the player.

Wisdom — needed by clerical or religious types for clerical strength.

Charisma — valuable for paladins and female thieves who can seduce.

Constitution — measure of physical health, determining the amount of damage a player can take before being killed.

Dexterity — a measure of coordination and quickness.

After the player is created, the class is selected. You will have ten different classes to choose from, but all of these will not be available to each player. Eligibility for a particular class is determined by the characteristics of the player. The ten classes are: Hirebrand, Mage, Ninja, Paladin, Peasant, Priest, Ranger, Sage, Samurai and Thief. You can then join a guild through which a player is educated and trained. Several guilds are generally available to a player, but the quality of each varies. The better guilds may reject a player or provide such dangerous training that the player may not survive the training. Finally, the player is given a name.

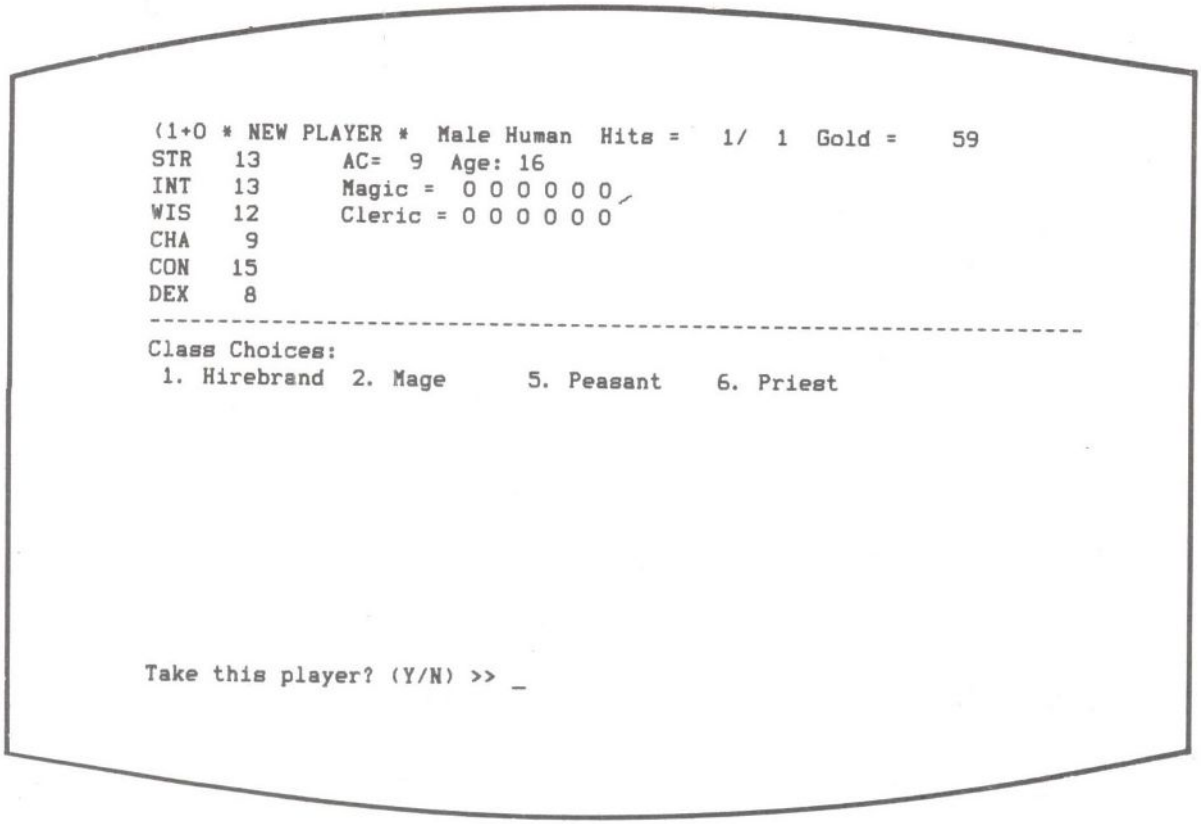
(1+0 * NEW PLAYER * Male Human Hits = 1/ 1 Gold = 59
STR 13 AC= 9 Age: 16
INT 13 Magic = 0 0 0 0 0 0
WIS 12 Cleric = 0 0 0 0 0 0
CHA 9
CON 15
DEX 8
Class Choices:
1. Hirebrand 2. Mage 5. Peasant 6. Priest
Take this player? (Y/N) >> _

Figure 14.2 Creating the character

Once the player is created, you are returned to the main menu. If you select the *T* option from this menu, you will enter the tavern and find your new player with an assortment of other creatures who may find a challenge in exploring the dungeon with your new character (see Figure 14.3). You can then select adventurers from those in the tavern for your mission to the dungeon. You may wish, before starting, to create several characters for the tavern. When you play the game the first time, you will find several characters already in the tavern that were created for you. You can select

from these, as well as the characters you have created. None of them will probably last very long on your early ventures into the dungeon.

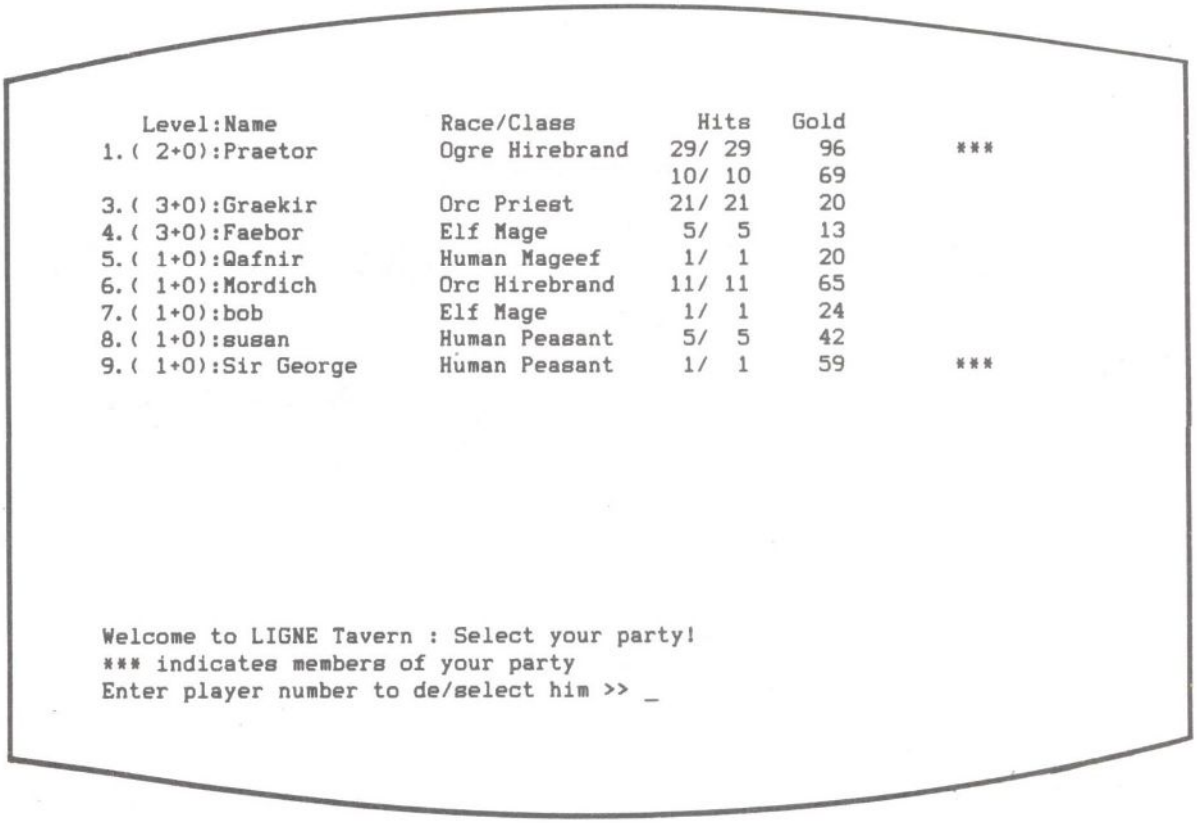
Level:Name Race/Class Hits Gold
1.(2+0):Praetor Ogre Hirebrand 29/ 29 96 ***
10/ 10 69
3.(3+0):Graekir Orc Priest 21/ 21 20
4.(3+0):Faebor Elf Mage 5/ 5 13
5.(1+0):Qafnir Human Mageef 1/ 1 20
6.(1+0):Mordich Orc Hirebrand 11/ 11 65
7.(1+0):bob Elf Mage 1/ 1 24
8.(1+0):susan Human Peasant 5/ 5 42
9.(1+0):Sir George Human Peasant 1/ 1 59 ***
Welcome to LIGNE Tavern : Select your party!
*** indicates members of your party
Enter player number to de/select him >> _

Figure 14.3 Choosing the party

Once your party is selected, you can go to the store to purchase the equipment for your party. You will not have much money, but do the best you can with the money you have. Your new friends from the tavern will probably have some gold, but will not do much better than the players you have created.

Finally, you should order your party. That is, you should decide who will be the lead adventurer and who will be the followers. The *O* option from the menu enables you to select the order for each player.

Once equipped and ordered, your party can enter the dungeon. From the main menu, select the *D* option. The display will change, and you will now see the party statistics and a small part of the first level of the dungeon. As you move about with the cursor keys (see Figure 14.4), you will see other areas of the dungeon, but the entire dungeon map is not displayed. As you meet monsters, the monster name will be displayed and you can choose from a variety of menu items to fight the monster.

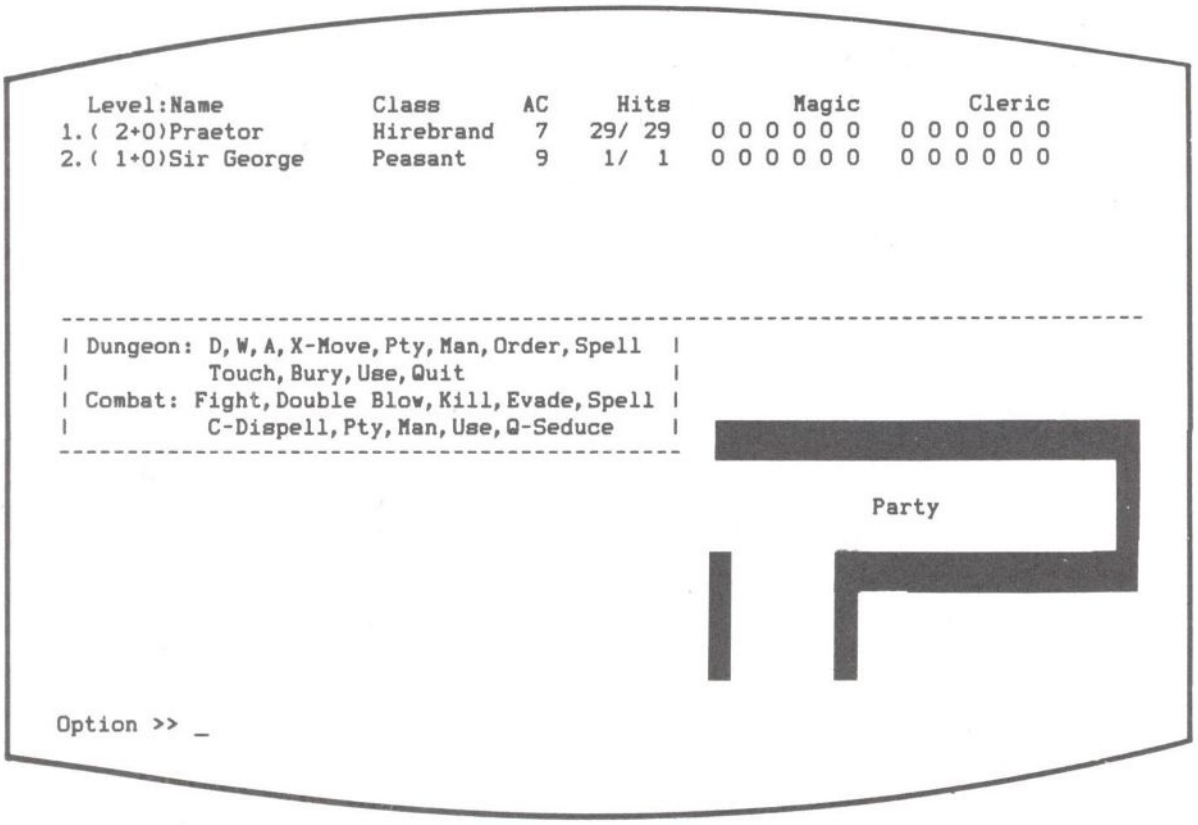
Level:Name Class AC Hits Magic Cleric
1.(2+0)Praetor Hirebrand 7 29/ 29 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
2.(1+0)Sir George Peasant 9 1/ 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
Dungeon: D, W, A, X-Move, Pty, Man, Order, Spell
Touch, Bury, Use, Quit
Combat: Fight, Double Blow, Kill, Evade, Spell
C-Dispell, Pty, Man, Use, Q-Seduce
Party
Option >> _

Figure 14.4 In the dungeon

Like Wizardry, you will find the dungeon very difficult and you will have a much better chance of survival by creating several characters and traveling as a group. The beginning games will be frustrating, as you will meet death often and must keep creating character groups. Only as you learn the characteristics of your characters, the monsters, and the dungeon can you gain enough skills to keep characters alive long enough to really enjoy the game.

The view of the dungeon is always from the top, and you see only the small local area of the dungeon and the exits from that area. You will need to draw maps carefully to complete your quest.

SPECIFICATIONS: Oubliette

Name: Oubliette

Type: D&D Adventure — medieval fantasy

System: IBM PC, XT

Price: $39.95

Manufacturer: Hesware
150 North Hill Dr.
Brisbane, CA 94005
(415) 468-4111

15

Graphic Adventures

In this chapter, we will look at several graphic adventures that are available for the IBM PC and compatible computers. Almost all of these games are written in Advanced BASIC, and will require Advanced BASIC (BASICA) and a color/graphics board to work. In some cases, these requirements are not identified in the game packaging. The games will *not* work with other graphic cards, such as the Hercules Graphic card. These will also *not* run on CP/M machines, but will run on many of the home computers, such as the Apple II, Atari, and Commodore computers.

Temple of Apshai

This is considered the classic of the graphic adventures, and is actually a combination of a graphic and role-playing type adventure. The IBM version includes both animated graphics and sound. As with a role-playing game, the game starts with the creation of a character. You can choose to create the character yourself or have the INNKEEPER create the character. If the INNKEEPER creates the character, it will have randomly chosen values of strength, constitution, dexterity, intelligence, intuition (wisdom), and ego (charisma). You can, optionally, enter these values for a character you created in another game if you create your own character. You can create either a strong or weak character.

You then purchase equipment for your character, bargaining with the INNKEEPER for the lowest possible price. If you manage to afford being well-equipped, you may find the weight of the equipment a disadvantage in trying to outmaneuver the monsters and you will tire easily. The advantage, of course, is better protection in battle. You will enjoy bargaining with the innkeeper, as the innkeeper's humor is quite entertaining as you try to get what you need at the lowest possible price.

Once equipped, you enter the dungeon alone to gain treasure and fame fighting the powers of evil. With the IBM PC version, the cursor keys control movement and the function keys are used for battle and special commands:

F1 — normal attack with sword
F2 — thurst with sword
F3 — parry with sword
F1 — fire normal arrow with bow
F2 — fire magic arrow with bow
F4 — change weapons (sword/bow)
F5 — examine wall for secret door
F5 — open discovered door
F6 — treasure (grab or drop)
F7 — listen (harken) for monsters or noise
F8 — search for traps
F9 — speak to monster or inventory query
F10 — heal

Notice that some function keys serve more than one purpose, depending upon circumstances and toggles set by other function keys.

As you explore, a small animated figure moves about the graphically displayed map of the dungeon, which shows only a few rooms of the dungeon at a time. You have a topside view of the dungeon. There are four levels in the dungeon, with 56 rooms on the first level. This provides a high degree of intrigue and entertainment. The dungeon is fixed, and does not vary between games. The game is open-ended, as the characters are randomly generated and the monster interaction varies between games. The *Book of Lore* that comes with the game gives elaborate descriptions of each room, monster, and treasure. The game is quite humorous at times, which tends to compensate for the tiresomeness you may experience in repetitive fighting of fantasy monsters for fantasy treasures that serve little

function except to buy more equipment to fight more monsters. This is not a specific criticism of Temple of Aphsai, but a common problem of all current graphic games. Temple of Aphsai has done an excellent job in using animation, sound, and humor to overcome these difficulties. The object is to discover all 20 treasures.

The game can be saved at any point, which enables you to return to any point from where you have saved it. It can also be extended four more levels by purchasing the additional Curse of Ra.

Adventure in Serenia

In this game you must cross the desert, swim the sea, and climb a mountain to rescue the Princess Priscilla. As the game starts, the princess has been kidnapped from Serenia by the wicked Wizard Harlim and locked away in a remote castle. You will start from a small village, and it will not take you long to be lost in the desert, facing a snake. The game, in a way, is more like an intelligence test, with the high-resolution screens that change slightly with each move. To map the game, you will need to be able to distinquish between each of the screens. You can zoom in on parts of the picture, move about by specifying directions, learn magic, and dig for treasure.

Voyager I

Of all the spaceships ever built, Voyager has been the most destructive spaceship known to man. The spaceship was created by a race of warrior robots for the sole purpose of galactic conquest. You, as a member of an assault force organized to destroy the spaceship, have managed to fight your way into the interior of the ship. You are now the sole survivor of the assault force. Your mission is to destroy all the robots on the ship or, alternately, to destroy the ship itself.

The game is a real-time game. The ship has four levels, each level with 36 locations (rooms or corridors). As you explore the ship, you will find various objects, such as generators, elevators, laser rifles, shuttle craft, and, of course, the robots. As the game starts, you do not know where any of these objects are located.

The game has two types of displays. One, the PLAY display, shows the view ahead of you as it would be seen by your eyes. It is a 3-D view of one of the ship's locations. By turning left and right and by turning around, you can get a different view. To the right of the view is a bar graph showing your strength status, the laser charge, and the ship's generating capacity. The second display, the MAP display, shows a top view of the rooms you have discovered on your current level, with elevators and other discovered objects.

At any time, a robot may pop out of the blue and challenge your right to exist. Robots can only be destroyed with a laser. The battle show is quite excellent, with sound effects that would entertain anyone. How much damage you can do to a robot depends upon the charge in your laser.

When the generating capacity of the spaceship reaches zero, the ship will self-destruct. You will have 60 seconds to reach a shuttle craft and abandon ship. The game is open-ended, with a variety of endings.

Voyager is written in BASICA. Loading the game and setting up for play takes several minutes on an IBM PC.

Dunzhin — Volume 1, Warriors of Ras

Dunzhin, like Temple of Apshai, combines the graphic and role-playing adventures. Although a color/graphics board is suggested, it can be played on a monochrome display. Up to six characters and six games can be saved between sessions.

When the game is started, from four to seven levels of a dungeon are created (you never know how many). The adventurer is left at the entrance to the first level. The object is to descend to the lowest level, capture the treasure, and get out alive. At the outset, you do not know the strength and dexterity of your character. As you battle the monsters, you gain experience and some awareness of your own powers. You start with a sword and a magic wand with one to three charges. The screen is blank initially (like Nemesis), and the map unfolds as you discover more of the level. You do not need to draw the map, the screen will show what you have discovered.

Monsters in Dunzhin are a little different. They move randomly through the dungeon, and may or may not fight you when discovered. You decide

whether to initiate battle. You can also bribe monsters, hide, run, or fight. Using these choices, even a weak warrior can get to the lowest level, get the treasure, and leave alive.

There are also traps in the dungeon. A beeping sound and a flashing light give you a warning that a trap is near. Once the trap is discovered, you must type any character instantly to keep from being injured.

The game includes sound effects (the opening music is by J. S. Bach) and good voice effects, but you will need 128K of memory for these extended effects.

Cyborg

There is no treasure here and no score. You will be well into the game before you even discover the objective. The map includes over a hundred locations and over two dozen moveable objects. The objects have many uses. At the start you will not know who you are, where you are, or why you are there. We will only tell you it is a science fiction adventure.

The story is good, and a save game feature is implemented, but there are several weak aspects of the game. The vocabulary is limited, and the mazes have little purpose. There are only a few clues, so you will need to do a lot of trial and error exploring.

Asylum

Asylum is a graphic adventure game with 3-D perspective graphics. There are a lot of good puzzles here, with a strange scenario, humor, and plenty of characters.

As the game begins, you are confined to a cell deep within a mental hospital. The object, of course, is to escape within the allotted time. The game begins at 9:30 P.M, and you have until 5:50 A.M. to escape (or until day returns). Sentences are used to initiate action from the keyboard. The vocabulary is known and can be displayed. The game can also be saved (suspended) for continuation at a later time.

The game can be tough at times, and coded hints are provided. You can choose whether to use the hints or not.

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves

This is another combination role-playing and graphics adventure. The Sultan's daughter has been abducted by some ruthless thieves and has been taken by them to their stronghold, deep within a mountain. You are the famous Ali Baba, and must rescue the princess.

There are plenty of characters here, each with its own characteristics (strength, armor, and weapons). Some of these will help you, others are not so good and must be overcome. You will face more than a hundred creatures or characters. Runes contain messages with a touch of Arabic writing. As you work to solve the adventure, you are accompanied by the music of Scheherazade, in multipart harmony. There are about 60 rooms.

Although the game is very entertaining with the high-resolution graphics, the side effect is a rather slow response at times in the many encounters that you will endure. You may encounter two other captives who will help you in your quest, and a unicorn may even come to your aid. Watch out for moving statues and tunnels that collapse. If you are good, you can even get the bad guys fighting each other!

The Prisoner

This game evolved from a television program in the sixties that involved an agent on a island. The unseen presence that brought the prisoner to the island also provides for every need of the prisoner. With every need satisfied, why would the prisoner want to escape? It soon becomes obvious that the prisoner is being studied by this unseen presence. The prisoner also values freedom more than the pleasures of the island, and tries, time and time again, to escape.

In this game, you are the prisoner trying to outwit your unseen captor. If you can escape the island, you win the game. When the game was first released, magazines were inundated with letters saying the game could not be won. The game maker replied that it could be won, but the puzzle was difficult. The latest version, Prisoner 2, has solved many of the problems of the earlier releases. Try your luck!

16

Telegaming

When you find your computer is just too small for the games you would like to play, or when the games you are playing are too much of a challenge and you are stuck, there is always telegaming. Using public access message systems and information utilities, you can meet other adventurers and play games together, or exchange clues for those games you have not yet been able to solve. The creative possibilities with telegaming are almost without limit (along with those on-line costs to pay for telegaming).

Games on Information Utilities

If you have an account on CompuServe or The Source, you will find hundreds of games on each of these. On CompuServe you can access the main game menu with the command GO GAM-1. Currently there are more than fifty games on-line, and a game is added at the rate of almost one a month. The adventure games on CompuServe currently include:

Original Adventure — (GO GAM-200) is the original 350-point adventure classic.

New Adventure — (GO GAM-20) is a 750-point enhanced version of the Original Adventure.

Scott Adams Adventures — (GO GAM-217) is a collection of the Scott Adams adventures mentioned earlier in this book.

Dungeons of Kesmai — (GO GAM-260) is a role-playing game.

Castle Telengard — (GO GAM-320) is another role-playing game.

You can also find multiplayer games on CompuServe, such as Megawars. Although these are not generally classed as adventure games, many adventurers enjoy trying them. Many of the CompuServe games can be suspended, saved, and restarted from the suspended point later.

Another important telegaming information utility is The Source. On The Source you can also find several adventure games:

Adventure — is a treasure and exploration game.

Adv550 — is an enhanced version of the Original Adventure.

Blackdragon — is a treasure hunting game with dungeons and labyrinths.

Castlequest — is another treasure hunting game.

You can find basic information about any of the games on The Source by entering the HELP command with the name of the game:

HELP ADV550

You can then play the game by using the play command with the game name:

PLAY ADV550

A game summary can be obtained by entering *HELP GAMES* from the utility prompt. Some of the games have additional instructions that can be obtained when the game is started. As with CompuServe, in many cases your exploration can be saved in a file on The Source and the adventure can be restarted from your suspension without having to start from the beginning.

Plato is a third information utility service that is offering adventure games for those who access their service. Currently there are 30 interactive games, including Mines of Moria (a graphic adventure) and Empire, in which as many as 30 players can roam a hostile universe in up to four teams.

Table 16.1 Information Utilities and Special Systems

CompuServe, Columbus, OH (800) 848-8199 or (614) 457-8650

The Source, Virginia, (800) 336-330 or (703) 734-7548

Plato, California (800) 233-3784 or (800) 233-3785

GameMaster, 1723 Howard St., Suite 219, Evanston, IL (312) 328-9009 (voice)
(312) 846-0516 (mansion)

Getting Help from User Groups

If you get stuck in a game on your microcomputer (for instance, while trying to fight the pirate in the Original Adventure), you can always use game user groups on the utilities to get help and hints. Most of the grand wizards that roam these groups enjoy helping others and creating cleverly disguised hints that are as challenging as the game itself. On The Source, you can use the command:

POST GAMES

to enter a query for help. On CompuServe, there are two alternatives. One method is to get the hints directly by using the command GO GSA-20. Here you will find hints for all the Infocom games: Starcross, Suspended, Deadline, Witness, Planetfall, Enchanter, and Infidel. You will also find clues to other games, such as Mask of the Sun, Serpent's Star, Dark Crystal, and Caribbean. If this is not enough for you, enter the GameSig area with the command: GO HOM-143. This group has 6000 members and is an encyclopedia of information. You will find on-line games in progress, conferences in which you can leave messages for help on a particular game, and data bases that include articles, games, and more. To get an overview of the data bases, use the command XA0, once you are in the user group (this function is not on the menu, but works). When you see the data base

area that interests you, you enter that area with the same type of command, with the data base number, such as XA1. Then you can use the displayed commands to scan, read, or download whatever interests you. Plan to spend a few hours with this the first time you try it, as it is absolutely addictive. Finally, you can use the GO GSA-1 command and use the walk-throughs to see the complete solution of an adventure game. This is really cheating, so you should not do this until you have played the game many hours.

Using PAMS

It is not necessary to have an account on one of the information utility systems to exchange game hints by electronic mail or to play role-playing games. Many adventure enthusiasts have put their own systems on-line for exchanging game hints, playing games, and otherwise building fantasy worlds. These systems, called PAMS (or public access message systems), are found in almost every city, and a growing number of these PAMS are supporting adventurers. A table of known active PAMS that support gaming is shown in Table 16.2. Some of these PAMS are free, some require a small fee. If a PAM is not in your city, it must be accessed using a long distance call. Many PAMS are quite busy, and you may have a hard time getting access.

The most famous of these PAMS is GameMaster, a fantasy system that appears as a six story mansion with 35 rooms when you dial it up. After you log in, a doorkeeper will take you to the main foyer, sign you in the guest book, and announce your arrival over the mansion's public address system. As you move about the mansion, you will find games, recipes (in the kitchen, of course), and restaurants in the Chicago area (in the dining room). In the time and chamber room you will find the adventure games. Two of these are Mini-Dungeon #1 and World of Eamon. There is a $15 registration fee to use GameMaster, and you will want to purchase their manuals in addition. On-line costs are a low $3 an hour, but if you are not near Chicago the long distance calls may kill you. The system runs on an Alpha Micro, and the designers are interested in others who wish to help them expand the system to other cities.

PBEM Gaming

Another alternative is PBEM, or play-by-electronic-mail. In this form of gaming, electronic mail is used to simulate a role-playing game and the players interact with a Dungeon Master as they explore a dungeon. You will find a PBEM in progress in the Compuserve GameSig almost every evening in the conferencing area. The dialogue looks much like a role-playing game, and a special command is used to roll the dice that control the movements and battles. You will also find PBEMs in progress on many public access message systems, as well as on The Source.

Table 16.2 PAMS that are game-oriented

State	Name	Telephone No.	Notes
	Lethbridge Game System	(403) 320-6923	(Alberta, Canada)
AZ	Explorer's Aid	(602) 991-0144	Contains tips for popular adventure games.
CA	Access One	(213) 537-3378	
	BBGS	(213) 699-0775	
	Dragon's Lair	(213) 428-5205	
	IBM PC RCP/M RBBS	(213) 973-2374	
	IF PMS	(714) 772-8868	
	Magnetic Fantasies	(213) 388-5198	Established in 1980 and run by two humans, three elves and a dwarf. FRP and games hints on BB.
	Softworx	(213) 473-2754	
	Sunrise Omega	(415) 452-0350	One of the best of the FRP systems run by Chaosium, a FRP and board game manufacturer with Karl Mauer.
	The Apple Board	(213) 944-5455	
	The Interface	(213) 477-4605	
	The Mines of Moria	(408) 688-9629	
FL	St. Pete BBS	(813) 866-9945	
	The Lynx	(305) 772-1076	
	The Oracle	(305) 475-9062	

Table 16.2 Continued

IL	Gamemaster	(312) 475-4884	Multiroom multilevel mansion with a variety of experiences.
	Nessy	(312) 773-3308	
	Warlock's Castle	(618) 345-6638	
MD	IBM PC BBS	(301) 937-4339	
NE	The Magic BBS	(402) 734-4748	
NJ	Dry Dock BBS	(201) 992-2565	
	Ed Gelb's Data Base	(201) 694-7425	
	No-Pay Play Colorado	(609) 953-1459	Games for downloading.
	The Sanctuary	(201) 891-9567	Forty-one boards and FRPGs of various types.
	Trashcom BBS	(201) 226-0341	
NY	Adventure to Atlantis	(914) 359-1517	
OR	CSF System	(503) 284-5130	Tips on games and gaming conference.
PA	Drucom BBS	(215) 855-3809	
TX	Beach Game	(904) 932-8271	
	Eclectric System	(214) 239-5842	
	Griffin's Lair	(214) 840-8294	
	Mines of Moria	(713) 871-8577	
	Teledunjon III	(214) 960-7654	
	White Pegasus	(214) 680-9322	Sysop Shalanna oversees five FRPGs. D&D and science fiction.
WI	Big-top games	(414) 259-9475	

17

Designing Your Own Adventure Games

After you have played adventure games for a while, you may want to create your own adventure game and dungeon to reflect your personal paradigm, or world view. With the game you create, you can communicate your values. You can use many conventional computer languages to write adventure games. BASIC is one of the most popular languages to use for personal game writing. Other languages, such as C, FORTRAN, FORTH, or Pascal, also work. Choosing the best language for an adventure game is discussed in the next chapter. Begin by developing your basic story or myth and then create the world in which your story will take place. Structured programming techniques are excellent for writing adventure games. In this chapter you will get an introduction to these techniques.

Developing the Myth

In beginning, choose a good myth with a specific goal. You are creating a story, and you will need to define the story, the characters, the world, and the rules by which this world will operate. Then define intermediate goals to affirm the explorer at various levels of game playing. If the game is made too difficult, with no reward until the end, the explorer may lose interest. Research your myth and setting. Be creative and entertaining,

adding a lot of humor and a few tricks to entertain the player. Keep the environment predictable to a large extent. As an example:

As a research director in an institute, you have developed a vehicle that can travel into the future. One of your research engineers, Dr. Z, disappeared into the future after stealing the machine. After six months, you have managed to build another time machine that is slightly more efficient. The new time machine is now operational and your mission is to locate Dr. Z and, also, as a "Lewis and Clark Expedition" to explore the future and bring back information (treasures) while surviving the dangers. You must travel alone.

The engines used to drive the time machine derive their energy from the entropy gradient that exists between any two time periods. Entropy is a measure of disorganization in a system. Since creation, the universe is running down and always has less energy available. The time machine rides down this entropy gradient. It moves easily into the future, but to get back you will need to build a local entropy gradient of high synergy, organization, and wholeness. In short, the traveler can become lost in the future, unless the traveler can create the type of world in the future that will give him or her the energy for the trip back to the present.

As a time traveler, you should not travel too far or too fast into the future until you gain some experience. The stress will be too much, and you may not have a viable currency, or the world may not even exist. As you gain experience, you learn how to move greater distances faster. There is also a transcendent energy force that can be of immeasurable help to you if you can learn to use it.

Each point in the future is a node. From the present there are three general pathways you could take. The first, or technological fix, assumes most of the current problems can be solved by increasing the investment in technological research development. The second path, or ZEG (zero energy growth), assumes most of the current problems can be solved by reducing the energy usage growth to zero. The final route is the historical trend, in which you keep going on the present course.

At each node you can meet people who can help or hinder your quest. These same people may appear at other nodes, but will age with time unless one of them captures your machine (like Dr. Z),

leaving you stranded. You, of course, do not age from the time travel itself, but you may meet your aged alter ego in the future.

The strategy for a successful win (which is not told the player) is to first meet basic survival needs at any given node, locate and participate in some community, research the time node at the library, and explore and discover possibilities at that node as you search for clues about Dr. Z.

Supplies can be purchased at any point in the game, but remember, under certain conditions this may be difficult. Examples: supply distribution problems under certain economic conditions, extreme inflation, or the establishment of a new currency.

As a player, you have several personal factors to consider. First, the stress of the travel will affect your health. Traveling greater distances means greater stress. You also have genetic factors that are determined randomly at the start of the game. The environment also affects your health, with low pollution levels and good nutrition important for good health. Several types of pollution exist: air, water, and high population density.

There are several directions of travel in the game that can be explored. Three spatial dimensions are available as well as the time dimension. There are also transcendent dimensions that exist that compare with the magic dimensions of other adventure games. It should also be noted that traveling long distances in the technical fix scenario can create certain paradigms in which you will appear to travel in certain magic dimensions, but in reality these are movements in spatial dimensions and appear magical due to the high level of technology.

Once the myth and world view are created, design a short opening that communicates to the player the game entry information, such as:

In a highly classified research project, you have been instrumental in the development of a new time machine that is capable of traveling into the future. A research engineer, Dr. Z, disappeared into the future with the machine six months ago. You have been able to build a second back-up machine that may (or may not) be completely functional. Your mission is to find Dr. Z and explore the future, bring back information, and survive without being destroyed yourself. You may now request admittance to the security control:

Enter Date (MM/DD/YY):
Enter Name:
Enter Password:

<PAUSE>

Password accepted. You are now in a laboratory corridor. Obvious exits are:

North through a door that says "Document Control Room;"
East through a door that says "Development Laboratory;"
West through a door that says "Main Office."
There is no sound. The time on a clock over the North door is 7:00 P.M.

The opening should be short and quick, as the game will probably be restarted by the player many times. The basic information needed to play the game should not be a part of the opening. In this case, the extensive information about the world we have just described could be a part of the game puzzle and left for the explorer to discover in a library area or in a research notebook in a laboratory desk somewhere in the game. Even the above opening may be too long for many players to accept.

Designing the Dungeon

Designing the world in which the fantasy takes place is generally the most time-consuming part of creating good adventure games and involves creativity and imagination. The world should behave as the explorer would expect it to behave. For example, you should not have a moon explorer walking around without a space suit. You can have unusual events or strange environments, but there should be a logical explanation for what is happening. Humor and clues should be used frequently, and the story should be interesting and challenging with intermediate goals and objectives. Avoid a linear solution, or at least the appearance of a linear solution. The player should also perceive the game as open-ended, even if only one ending exists. If possible, create a wide variety of endings. Include dangers and adversaries. Create one or more conflict elements for interest. Read

the next section and chapter on designing and programming the game before you start, as you will gain many ideas on the story design. A good story may take a year or more to design.

A part of the world for our example game is shown in Figure 17.1. This is only one level of the game, and there are multiple levels that represent various time periods and future scenarios. Design all of the map for all levels before programming, defining all adversaries, treasures, tools and puzzles.

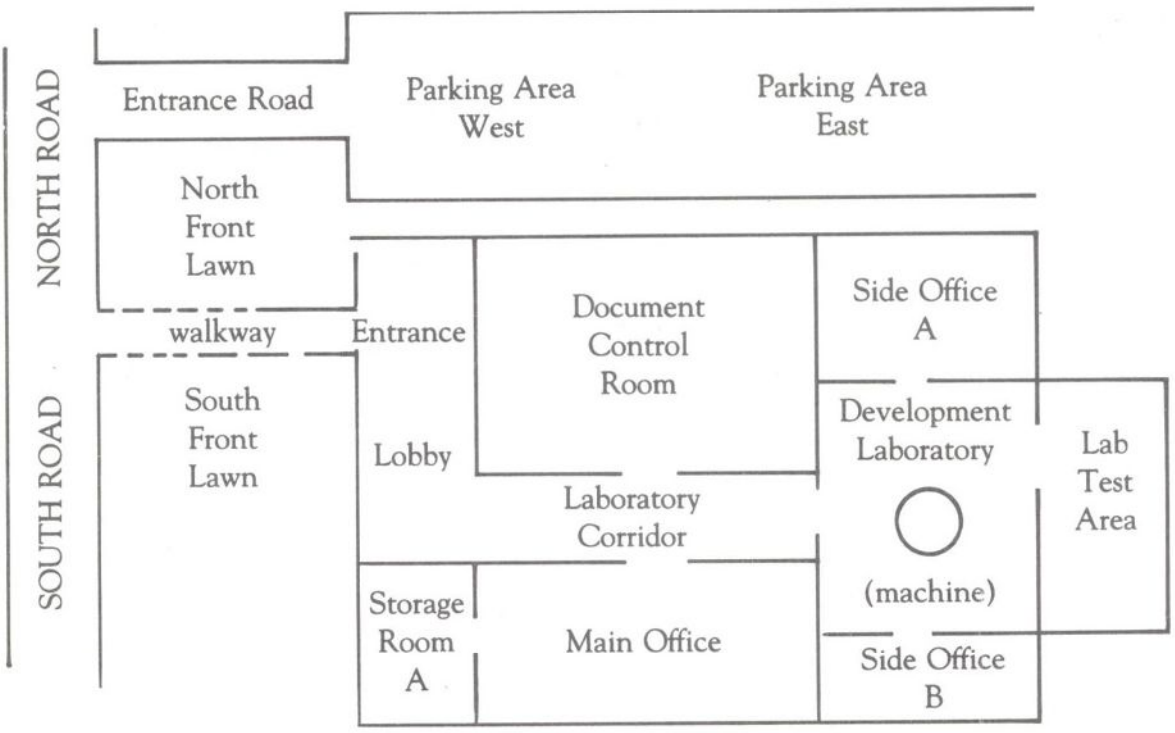

Figure 17.1 Partial map of present-time level

Designing the Program

The coding should be in structured form. Notice that at this point we have not discussed what language to use. Indeed, that is not even a consideration at this point and should not be decided until the game is well developed and just before programming. A top-down approach should be used. The primary goal of the game is defined initially before starting the design, and the game is conceptualized in modules. The objective of each module is then defined. The modules can be partitioned further into smaller modules. The interrelationship of the modules is then drawn as a *data flow diagram* (see Figure 17.2).

As an example, the data flow diagram of Figure 17.2 shows a collection of modules. This is a diagram of the flow of information. It does not show logic or data control. If structured programming is a new concept for you, locate a few books on this subject before starting your game design. Both structured programming and list processing are important concepts used in the design of good adventure games.

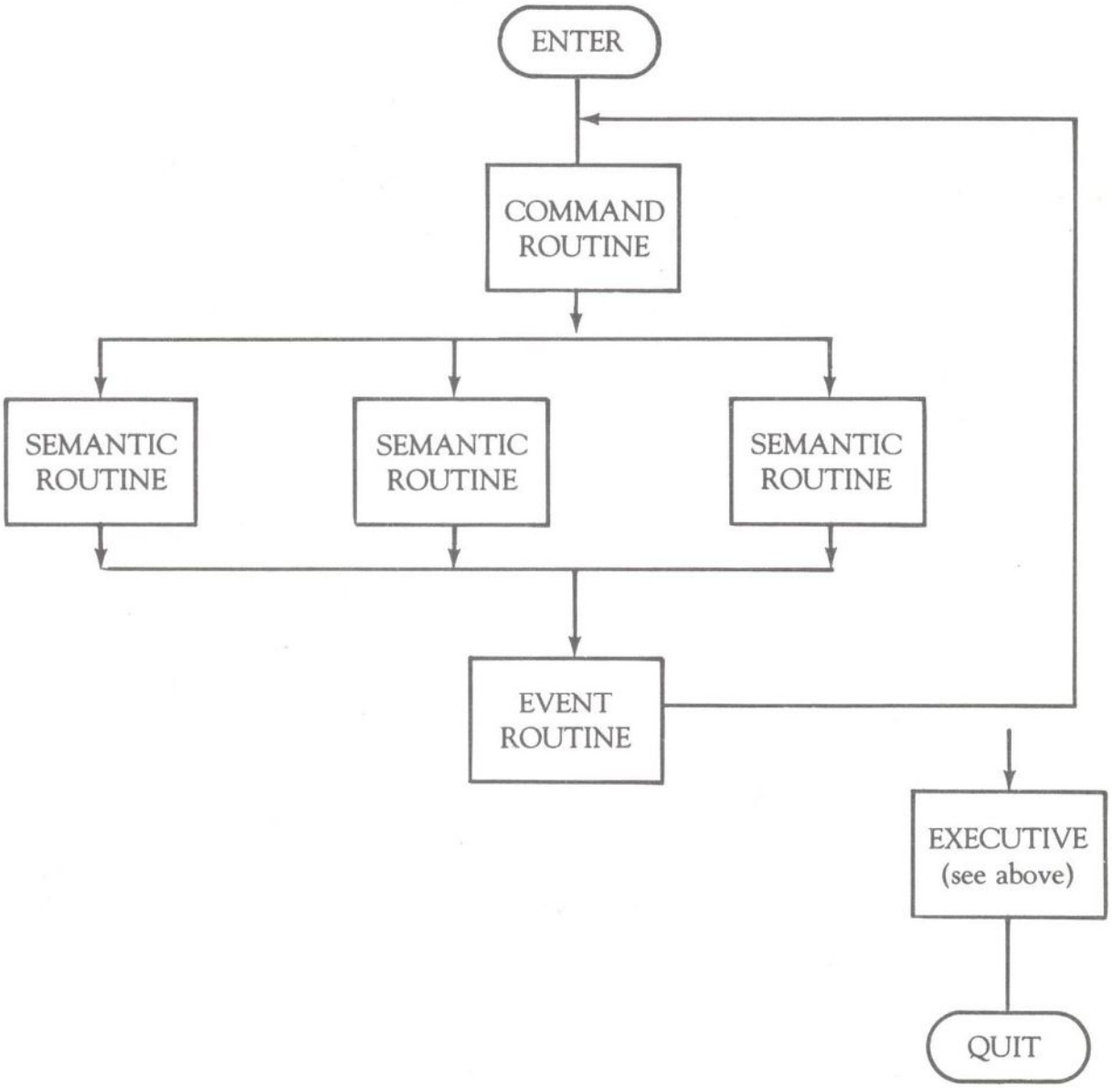

Figure 17.2 General flow diagram of adventure game

There are basically two programming approaches that are used in designing good prose adventure games. The first approach, which was used by Scott Adams (Adventure International), is to write a generalized game

program in BASIC, C, Pascal, or FORTRAN and drive it with data files to personalize it for different games. A good example of this is Scott Adams' Pirate Adventure, of which the complete listing in BASIC was published in *BYTE* (see Appendix C). This program can be used to build other adventure games by changing the data files.

The second method of designing prose adventure games is to create a special game language and write a compiler and interpreter specifically for this game language. This will permit more elegant games than the first approach, but is more complex and generally requires a minicomputer or larger computer to develop the games. Considerable programming skills are also necessary. Once the game is compiled, it can be played with an interpreter on a microcomputer. The Infocom games, such as Zork, are an example of this second approach.

Most of what is said in this chapter is applicable to either approach. Start with the modules and expand the functions and objectives of each module further. The basic modules are the initializer, the executive, the command routine, the semantic routines, and the event routine. The initializer loads the data information into the computer and sets all variables to their starting values.

The executive module is the primary controlling routine. It determines which module is active at a particular time and the sequence of the primary module activities.

The command routine or module, often called the parser, in its simplest form interprets the input command string to extract the verb and noun. The verb and noun (object) are located in a dictionary table and the corresponding number for each is returned. If the extracted key words are not in the dictionary, an error message must be returned. The codes for the words are then used to access an action table to determine if the codes can be used in combination. Certain verbs may not need a noun (as WAIT or EXAMINE). Directions (as SOUTH or S) are considered nouns and may not have a verb. You may also wish to eliminate the necessity of having to use verbs with certain objects, as GOLD could be TAKE GOLD if the adventurer does not have the gold and DROP GOLD if the adventurer is holding the gold. If a particular noun entered by the player cannot be used with a particular verb, an error message must be given.

Both the dictionary and action table must be kept in the computer memory, as speed is essential. If the command is valid, the codes for the noun and verb are passed to the semantic routines, with the verb code used to select the proper semantic routine. If the command is not acceptable, a

message is sent to the console and another command is requested. Synonyms must also be recognized and converted to the proper codes. If it is necessary for the game to run faster, the command module is generally the speed bottleneck. By rewriting this module in assembly level language, you can gain considerable speed. You may also wish to check for hanging questions in the command routine. The user may type *GET THE SWORD*, for example, and the routine will respond with WHICH SWORD?.

The semantic routines or modules carry out the player's command. The proper routine is selected by the verb code, and the noun (or object) codes are parameters passed to the routines. Even a simple adventure game will have two dozen or more semantic routines.

After the semantic routine is executed, the event routine is executed. This is actually a series of routines, executed linearly, that process all periodic events. These routines check for the lamp burning out in a cave, fuel exhaustion in a spaceship, visions or magic events, the appearance of adversaries, and fatigue. After the event routine is completed, the program returns for another command. The game can be terminated from a semantic routine (as with a QUIT) command) or by the event routines under specific conditions, such as falling into a pit or death in a fight.

The modules, in turn, are then broken down and defined at a submodule level. For example, you may need to write a routine to display a character string if the character string is stored in memory in a compressed form. This routine could be used by several modules.

It should also be mentioned that some of those who design the worlds and games like to include another routine to process background actions *before* the action table is accessed in the command routine. This adds an element of unpredictability in the game, which a player may or may not like. Another background routine could even be added after the action table is accessed and before the semantic routines are executed. A background routine is a routine that is executed outside of the explorer's control. The event routine, for example, is a background routine. It checks for candles burning out, a spaceship out of fuel, or an adversary suddenly appearing. The probability of the event happening may be under the player's control, but the event itself is time dependent (how many moves have been made) or based on other factors.

18

Programming Your Own Adventure Game

After you have designed your game, you can begin the actual programming. Writing a game without designing it first is like writing a book without outlining it first. You may want to read this chapter before designing your game. But avoid the temptation to learn a language, play around with a few routines, and weave these routines into a program before the design is completed. Always design the game first, and design top-down (myth or story first, goals and subgoals next, and finally the module design). In this chapter we will look at the more nuts-and-bolts approach to writing the program after the design is completed.

Choosing the Language to Use

The first Original Adventure was written in FORTRAN. Many of the prose adventure games that emerged after Original Adventure were written in BASIC, such as the Scott Adams Adventures. Although the Original Adventure runs well on microcomputers as a compiled FORTRAN program, the BASIC language products that emerged later had a limited vocabulary and no more than 30 to 40 rooms. Although BASIC has remained a popular programming language for writing adventure games, it has several serious limitations:

1. BASIC is very poor at string handling, and adventure games use a lot of character string processing. The most popular of the BASIC languages are written by Microsoft and contain a garbage collecting routine that reorganizes the strings when memory space becomes limited. This can lock up a computer for the duration of the time it takes to reorganize the strings, frustrating a player.

2. BASIC is not famous as a structured language and provides few assets for the structured design concepts mentioned in Chapter 17. Many forms of BASIC have added features to permit structured programming, but these are often optional for the programmer to use. Many programmers learn BASIC without learning anything about programming. Programming concepts are portable between languages and a good programmer feels comfortable in any language that supports good structured concepts. In addition, the interpretive nature of BASIC actually encourages design by the seat of the pants, rather than the structured design necessary for good game creation.

3. Subroutines in BASIC cannot have arguments passed — something that is necessary in the creation of the various modules. Subroutine labels cannot be used in many versions of BASIC, and in some cases line numbers must be used. As a result, the final program is difficult to read and follow in a logical manner.

4. BASIC is not a recursive language. This means a routine cannot call itself. To understand this problem, try to write a spreadsheet program in BASIC! Most of the better languages now have recursive capability.

For these reasons, you might want to avoid writing adventure games in BASIC. Most BASIC adventure games look like they were written by a kid who learned BASIC before learning programming. The program may work, but I defy you to try to fix any minor problems that may still remain, or to add new features. Once a person has learned good programming, there would be nothing really wrong with using the BASIC language to write a good game, provided structured design rules are followed.

The better languages to use in the creation of adventure games are Pascal, FORTH, and C. C is much like a portable assembly language. It has the power and speed of assembly language programming, plus the advantage of being able to make a program transportable to other computers. FORTH

is a relatively new language, and is particularly popular for graphic games on the small home systems, such as the Atari computers. As it has its own disk file structure, it is somewhat cumbersome to use on larger systems, particularly hard disks. Pascal is popular in the educational community because it has many features that are endorsed by those who do structured programming.

The Data Structure

As mentioned in Chapter 17, our final design is a collection of modules in which a command routine interprets the input sentence and identifies the verb and noun for the subsequent semantic routines. The verb determines which semantic routine is used. The noun is passed to the routine as an argument.

The noun word passed to the semantic routine refers to an object or thing. Some objects have a hierarchical relationship to other objects (parent/child), or a containment relationship. For example, a chest could contain a treasure or a matchbook could contain a match. In the better adventure games (as the Infocom games) the relationships can be treelike, with one object containing another object that contains another (Grandparent/Parent/Child) to any desired level, and a parent object containing more than one child (How many things can you put in a chest?). Most adventure games have relatively few objects, generally less than 256. This means the number of an object can be stored as an eight-bit byte.

Each object will have static and dynamic properties. Static properties are the same during the game and do not vary between games. These include the initial location of the object, certain aspects of the description, the weight, value, and a status word indicating whether the object can be eaten, burned, or fought. Dynamic qualities can change during a game and include the current location of the object, the state of the object (open or closed, broken or unbroken, etc.), and its relationship to other objects (whether the object, for example, is in a chest). Static qualities can be stored as a table and loaded to an array in the computer memory on starting. The number of the object becomes the pointer in the array, which also contains the dynamic qualities.

The map of a fantasy world is stored as a location table, as it contains lengthy descriptions in character strings. It may be accessed continually

from the disk during the game play on elaborate adventures. Optionally, you may wish to load all the brief descriptions to a memory array and use the disk only for lengthy descriptions. Each record contains a room description (perhaps a short and long description) and a transition map showing the numbers of the adjacent rooms. The fields in this record represent directions: North, South, West, East, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest, Up, and Down (See Figure 18.1), and perhaps an In and Out. The value of this field is the number of the adjacent room in that direction. A value of zero indicates no exit in this direction. A negative number could be used to indicate a secret door, magic transportation, or other special feature (such as random movement).

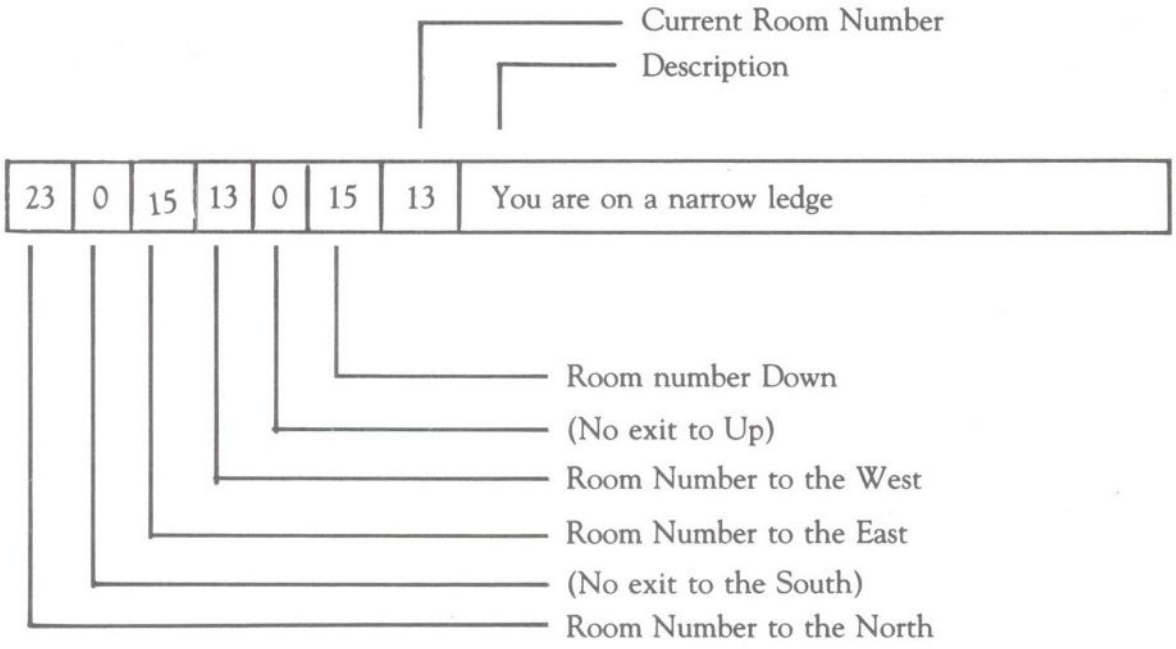

Figure 18.1 File description of location table

(Note: This could be expanded to include other directions as NW, SW, IN, or OUT. Duplicate numbers may appear, and the room number itself may be in one or more directions.)

Programming the Game

If you have done everything correctly to this point, the actual programming of the game should proceed quickly. You may have to backtrack at times and redefine a data structure, or embellish a scenario a bit, but the actual time-consuming development has already been completed.

Keep your program as generalized as possible. In this way you can use it

again for other games by changing only the data files. Keep all the information that pertains to a specific game in separate data files so that you can change the game by changing the data files. Use a parameter file to control global variables that will apply for the entire game (such as the maximum score) and, perhaps, another file for terminal attributes.

Develop techniques to minimize disk access as much as possible. Frequently used routines and data should be kept in memory at all times. Less frequently used routines, if necessary, can be kept in overlays and only loaded when needed. Be sure to close files that are not being used, particularly files that are being updated in the program, such as a SAVE file that a player can use to continue from where he or she left off, or a file that saves a character for later use.

Develop techniques to keep disk access, when needed, as fast as possible. Data initially loaded at the beginning of the game could be in a file that is sequentially read. During the game, use random access files to get data. The first record in the file should contain information on the length of the file, and can be used later to check pointers in the file to be sure valid pointers are used.

Although the program design is top-down, the programs are written and developed bottom-up. Small routines called by several programs are written first and tested, and finally the programming proceeds upward until you are able to write the main program. This is done to enable testing since, if the higher level routines are written first, they cannot be tested.

Document the program liberally as you go, explaining what is happening and why. Define variables at the beginning of the program. For example, a BASIC program may have variables documented as:

```
REM MOVES# = NUMBER OF MOVES THE PLAYER HAS
  MADE
REM SCORE# = CURRENT SCORE OF PLAYER
```

Use long variable names to add clarity for the variables. For example, use MOVES# instead of M#. Avoid the trick of reusing variables to minimize memory used unless absolutely necessary, as it is confusing in debugging. For the same reason, avoid a common programming trick of storing two variables to a single programming variable unless absolutely necessary. If you find yourself limited in memory space, you will need to compromise on certain rules, such as packing multiple variables to a single

variable in the language, packing character strings to achieve better utilization of memory, and reusing variables.

Concentrate at the beginning in constructing the basic program with a few semantic routines. Once this is operational, expand your vocabulary, the number of semantic routines, and the quality of the event routine. After the program is basically operational, you can add SAVE features, traps for hanging questions, and perhaps give a few hints in the game to a player if a player stays too long in a certain area and seems stuck.

In writing the program, avoid the GOTO statement and use DO WHILEs and DO UNTILs instead. This gives a more structured approach. If using BASIC, you may want to add a few assembly level routines to speed up the processing. Be consistent in all of your programming.

If the program must go away for awhile and do something (like creating the initial dungeon), it should display a message on the screen to let the player know what is going on.

Building Adventure Games with Kits

Another alternative in creating adventure games is to use the Building an Adventure Kit sold by Workman and Associates (see Appendix). The kit is $89.50, and is sold in a variety of CP/M formats. Even if you do not have a CP/M system, you may find it worthwhile to buy a copy and have a friend with a CP/M system print out the data files so you can study them.

The kit contains a complete copy of the Original Adventure. You can modify it or change it to make a new version. This is one of the best versions of Original Adventure, and runs *very* fast. That's because of the way the data file is stored on the disk. If you copy the disk, you must copy the entire disk using a program that does not alter the tracks and sectors. The conventional PIP copying program does not work.

Now here is the good part. The game is about 35 percent hard code. The other 65 percent of the game is stored in a data table that is compiled by a BUILD program that is included in the kit. The data table for the Original Adventure is enclosed. You can scan this, see how the game works, and modify it with a word processor to your heart's content. You can then use the BUILD program to compile it again, and you have a new game!

The hard code part of the game is the part that cannot be changed by editing the data table and is not easily changed by the programmer. You can change the hard code with DDT or SID, but it is a rather tricky operation and definitely not for the beginner. For example, the pirate follows you and takes your treasure, stashing it in location 114 with object 55 (the chest). You can rename the pirate or location and change all the scripts associated with the pirate. But, whatever you call him, he will still follow you around and take your treasures. You cannot change that without altering the hard code.

Because the data table and manual with this kit tell you a lot about the solution of the game, don't use the data table unless you have already played the Original Adventure and are crawling the wall trying to get to the endgame. If you have completed the Original Adventure, you will have a lot of fun with this kit reading about elusive parts of the game you may have missed.

Even though this kit has only limited capability, it is very useful as an educational tool for understanding how adventure games work and for designing your own games from scratch.

Appendix
Game Directory

Aardvark Ltd.
2532 S. Commerce
Walled Lake, MI 48088
(313) 669-3110

Adventure International
P.O. Box 3435
Longwood, FL 32750
(305) 862-6917
(800) 327-7172

Armonk Corporation
610 Newport Center Dr.
Suite 955
Newport Beach, CA 92660
(714) 760-3955

Avalon Hill Microcomputer Games, Inc.
4517 Harford Rd.
Baltimore, Md. 21214
(301) 254-5300

Eduware
28035 Dorothy Dr.
Agoura, CA 91301
(213) 706-0661

Epyx
1043 Kiel Ct.
Sunnyvale, CA 94089
(408) 745-0700

Hesware
150 North Hill Dr.
Brisbane, CA 94005
(415) 468-4111

IBM
Entry Systems Division
P.O. Box 1328
Boca Raton, FL 33432
(800) 447-4700

Infocom, Inc.
55 Wheeler St.
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 492-1031

Med Systems Software
P.O. Box 3558
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
(800) 334-5470

Micro Fun
2310 Skokie Valley Rd.
Highland Park, IL 60035
(312) 433-7550

Norell Data Systems
3400 Wilshire Blvd.
P.O. Box 70127
Los Angeles, CA 90010
(213) 258-1653

Pryority Software, Inc.
25570 Chiquito Pt.
Carmel, CA 93923
(408) 625-0125

Quality Software
6660 Reseda Blvd, #105
Reseda, CA 91335
(213) 344-6599

ScreenPlay
P.O. Box 3558
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
(800) 334-5470

Sentient Software, Inc.
P.O. Box 4929
Aspen, CO 81612
(303) 925-9293

Sierra On-Line, Inc.
Sierra On-Line Building
Coarsegold, CA 93614
(209) 683-6858

Sir-Tech Software, Inc.
5 Main Street
Ogdensburg, NY 13669
(315) 393-6633

Software Toolworks
15233 Ventura Blvd.
Suite 1118
Sherman Oaks, CA 91403
(213) 986-4885

Supersoft
P.O. Box 1628
Champaign, IL 61820
(217) 359-2112

TSR Hobbies, Inc.
P.O. Box 756
Lake Geneva, WI 53147
(414) 248-3625

Workman and Associates
112 Marion Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91106
(818) 796-4401

Adventure Games — by Company

Manufacturer	Adventure Games	Systems	Price
Aardvark Ltd.	Dungeons of Death	P	$24.95
	Pyramid	P	$22.95
	Quest	P	$24.95
Adventure International	Scott Adams' Adventures	C	$39.95
Armonk Corporation	Executive Suite	P	$39.95
Avalon Hill	Voyager I	P	
Eduware	Prisoner 2	P	$32.95
Epyx	Temple of Apshai	P	$39.95
Hesware	Oubliette	P	$39.95
IBM	Adventure in Serenia	P	$30.00
	Microsoft Adventure	P	$30.00
Infocom	Deadline	CP	$49.95
	Enchanter	CP	$49.95
	Infidel	CP	$49.95
	Planetfall	CP	$49.95
	Sorcerer	CP	$49.95
	Starcross	CP	$39.95
	Suspended	CP	$49.95
	Witness	CP	$49.95
	Zork I, II, III	CP	$30.00 (each)
Med Systems	Dungeons	P	$29.95
Micro Fun	Death in the Caribbean	P	$35.00
Norell Data Systems	Original Adventure	P	$24.95
	Phantom's Revenge	P	$24.95
Pryority Software	Forbidden Quest	P	$39.95
Quality Software	Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves	P	$32.95
Screenplay	Asylum	P	$29.95
	Dunzhin	P	$29.95
Sentient Software	Cyborg	P	$34.95
Sierra On-Line	Ultima I	P	$39.95
	Ultima II	P	$66.95
	Ulysses & the Golden Fleece	P	$34.95
Sir-Tech Software	Knight of Diamonds	P	$34.95
	Wizardry	P	$49.95
Software Toolworks	Original Adventure	CP	$21.95
Supersoft	Nemesis	C	$40.00

System Code C CP/M
P PC-DOS
CP both CP/M and PC-DOS

Adventure Games — by Game

Adventure Games	Manufacturer	Systems	Price
Adventure in Serenia	IBM	P	$30.00
Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves	Quality Software	P	$32.95
Asylum	Screenplay	P	$29.95
Cyborg	Sentient Software	P	$34.95
Deadline	Infocom	CP	$49.95
Death in the Caribbean	Micro Fun	P	$35.00
Dungeons	Med Systems	P	$29.95
Dungeons of Death	Aardvark L.T.D.	P	$24.95
Dunzhin	Screenplay	P	$29.95
Enchanter	Infocom	CP	$49.95
Executive Suite	Armonk Corporation	P	$39.95
Forbidden Quest	Pryority Software	P	$39.95
Infidel	Infocom	CP	$49.95
Knight of Diamonds	Sir-Tech Software	P	$34.95
Microsoft Adventure	IBM	P	$30.00
Nemesis	Supersoft	C	$40.00
Original Adventure	Norell Data Systems	P	$24.95
	Software Toolworks	CP	$21.95
Oubliette	Hesware	P	$39.95
Phantom's Revenge	Norell Data Systems	P	$24.95
Planetfall	Infocom	CP	$49.95
Prisoner 2	Eduware	P	$32.95
Pyramid	Aardvark Ltd.	P	$22.95
Quest	Aardvark Ltd.	P	$24.95
Scott Adams' Adventures	Adventure International	C	$39.95
Sorcerer	Infocom	CP	$49.95
Starcross	Infocom	CP	$39.95
Suspended	Infocom	CP	$49.95
Temple of Apshai	Epyx	P	$39.95
Ultima I	Sierra On-Line	P	$39.95
Ultima II	Sierra On-Line	P	$66.95
Ulysses & the Golden Fleece	Sierra On-Line	P	$34.95
Voyager I	Avalon Hill	P	
Witness	Infocom	CP	$49.95
Wizardry	Sir-Tech Software	P	$49.95
Zork I, II, III	Infocom	CP	$30.00

Glossary

Attract mode — the game display used between plays in a graphic adventure. Often used in reference to arcade games in which a display is designed to attract players and entice them to insert coins to play.

Dungeon — the world view or map for an adventure game. It need not necessarily be a true dungeon, but could be an estate (as in a mystery game), a world in space (as in Starcross), or a ghost town (as in one of Scott Adams' adventures).

Dungeon Master — someone who designs dungeons. Controls how the world works during the active play, including adversaries (such as monsters).

Dungeons and Dragons — often abbreviated as D&D, refers to the role-playing game techniques developed by TSR Games.

Endgame — the final puzzle in a prose adventure. Often used to reveal the game objective. Can switch the adventurer into another level for the challenge.

Frotz (frahtz) — an abbreviation for frobnitz. Refers to the wizard in Zork (frobboz). Used to refer to an unspecified object. Adventurers speak of going frotzing or frobing. The word has many variations.

FRP — Fantasy Role Play. A game classification applied to games of the D&D type.

Grok — to understand in a total sense. It is from Robert Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land* and was used in the novel as a Martian word to mean: to be one with.

Interlogic — the language used by Infocom to develop their games.

Maze — a confusing network of connected rooms.

Node — (see room)

PAMS — public access message systems. Computer systems that are left on-line by users and used for a variety of purposes, including game playing and electronic messaging.

Parser — that part of the adventure game program that interprets the input command string. A good parser can interpret complete sentences.

PBEM — play by electronic mail. The use of electronic mail to play games such as Dungeons and Dragons or Diplomacy.

Red herring — a false clue inserted to mislead the adventurer.

Room — a location in an adventure game in which a decision can be made. Also called a node.

Telegaming — the use of telecommunications to play games, get hints for games, or to do PBEM.

Wizard — an expert at solving adventure games. Often referred to as a Grand Wizard. One who groks adventure games.

Bibliography

Books

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